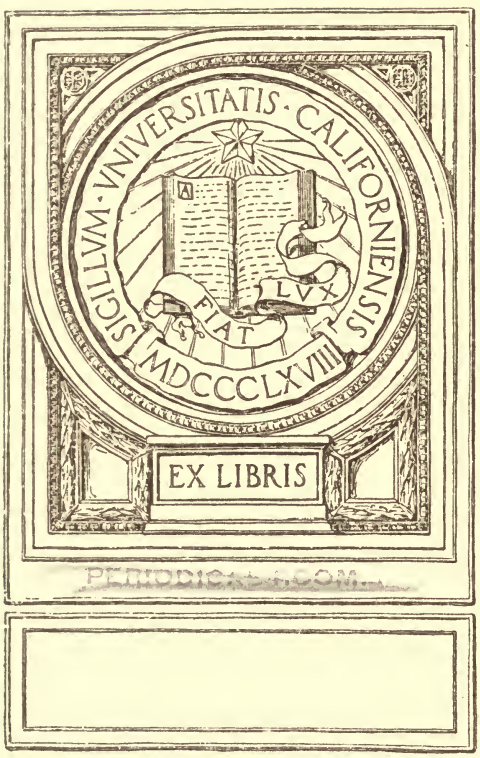

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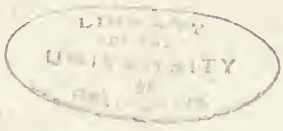

THE "TIMES" ON THE AMERICAN WAR - *Leslie Stephen*

A HISTORICAL STUDY

WILLIAM ABBATT

TARRYTOWN NEW YORK

1915

THE "TIMES"

ON THE

AMERICAN WAR:

A HISTORICAL STUDY

BY L. S.

(LESLIE STEPHEN)

LONDON

WILLIAM RIDGWAY

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RES ARDUA VETUSTIS NOVITATUM DARE; NOVIS AUCTORITATEM; OBSOLETIS, NITOREM; OBSCURIS, LUCEM; FASTIDITIS, GRATICUM; DUBIIS, FIDEM; OMNIBUS VERO NATURAM, ET NATURAL SUA OMNIA.

ITAQUE ETIAM NON ASSECUTIS, VOLUISSE ABUNDE PULCHRUM UTQUE MAGNIFICUM EST.

(It is a difficult thing to give newness to old things, authority to new things, beauty to things out of use, fame to the obscure, favor to the hateful (or ugly), credit to the doubtful, nature to all and all to nature. To such, nevertheless as cannot attain to all these, it is greatly commendable and magnificial to have attempted the same

PLINY,—preface to his *Natural History*.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS, although not specifically devoted to Abraham Lincoln, may fairly be termed a Lincoln item, and is one of the rarest publications bearing upon the War of the Rebellion. No copy can be found in any of a number of our greatest libraries, and I am enabled to reprint it only by the kindness of Mr. George Haven Putnam, who possesses a MS. copy made for him from an original in the British Museum because, even in London, long ago, he could not procure an original. Nor have I seen it listed in any of the countless catalogues received from English and American dealers, or auctioneers, in many years.

The author was the late Leslie Stephen (1832-1902) the distinguished author of so many valuable works, notably the "Playground of Europe," the "Science of Ethics," and of that "Life of Johnson" which has been called "the peerless model of short biographies." He was also editor of the "Cornhill Magazine," and from 1882 to 1891, of the "Dictionary of National Biography."

Strangely enough the long article upon him in this latter work does not mention *The "Times" on the American War*, nor does the latest edition of the "Britannica." This may fairly be assumed to be due to its rarity.

THE "TIMES"

ON THE

AMERICAN WAR

I—The "Times" on American Affairs

IN discussing the causes of the Crimean War, Mr. Kinglake gives a prominent place to the agency of the *Times*. He does not decide whether the *Times* was the master or the slave of the British people, whether it prompted their decisions, or merely divined them by a happy instinct. The coincidence of sentiment between the *Times* and common sentiment is explicable on either hypothesis. A story, however, is related by Mr. Kinglake, which, if it is to be accepted as authentic, would tend to clear up the mystery. The *Times*, he says, used to employ a shrewd, idle clergyman, whose duty was to hang about in places of public resort, to listen neither to the pre-eminently foolish nor to the pre-eminently wise, but to wait till some common and obvious thought was repeated in many places by many average men all unacquainted with each other. The thought was the prize he sought for, and brought home to his employers. Once in possession of this knowledge, they again employed able writers to enforce this opinion by arguments certain to fall upon willing ears. The *Times* was meanwhile regarded by ordinary men and women as a mysterious entity, a concrete embodiment of the power known in the abstract as "public opinion". As Mr. Kinglake says, men prefixed to its name such adjectives as showed "that they regarded the subject of their comments in the light of an active sentient being, having a life beyond the span of mortal men, gifted with reason, armed with a cruel strength, endued with some of the darkest of human passions, but clearly liable hereafter to the direst penalty of sin". They supposed it, I may add, to be in possession of a political knowledge

profounder than the knowledge of any private individual, if not than the knowledge of statesmen, and acquiesced in its arrogating the right of speaking in the name of the English people.

It is, however, notorious that no part of the power wielded by the *Times* is derived from any respect for its consistency or its unselfish advocacy of principles. And this follows naturally if we accept as substantially accurate the account given by Mr. Kinglake of the process by which its opinions are determined. Although common to the great mass of the educated English classes must in all cases be a tolerably obvious one. If it refers to domestic matters which are familiar in all their bearings to the majority of educated men, it will probably be marked by shrewd common-sense; when thousands of Englishmen agree in thinking that the suffrage is unfairly distributed, or that trade is oppressively taxed, they are probably right. Their opinions are, at least, the result of an operation which may, without a palpable misnomer, be described as thought. In such cases, the *Times*, in concentrating their opinions into one focus, will adopt a policy which, if not resting upon very exalted considerations, is at least dictated by homely good sense, and not marked by utter ignorance. But the case is widely different when we come to foreign politics. English ignorance in such matters is proverbial. The name of America five years ago called up to the ordinary English mind nothing but a vague cluster of associations, compounded of Mrs. Trollope, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A few flying reminiscences of disputes about territory, and a few commonplaces about democracy, made up what we were pleased to call our opinions. Most people were as ignorant of American history since the Revolution as of the history of the Chinese empire, and of American geography as of the geography of Central Africa. Our utterances on American affairs might have the external form of judgment; they were, in substance, mere random assertions about unknown quantities. Now, the *Times*, by the law of its being, would have to be the mere echo of these sham

decisions. The honest British public confidently laid down the law, like a Dogberry giving judgment in a Chancery suit, and the *Times* stood by as a skilful reporter to dress its blundering dogmas in the language of political philosophy. The British public talked about "Yankee snobbishness;" the *Times* translated its words into solemn nothings about "American democracy", and the public thought it had said rather a good thing.

I wish to trace some of the consequences of this peculiar process by which a newspaper transmutes our rubbish into a kind of Britannia metal, and obtains our sympathy because we have ourselves provided the raw material, and our admiration because it is worked up into such sparkling tinsel. The very first necessity for this dexterous shuffling is an affectation of absolute infallibility; a true account of the *Times* would run like Prince Henry's description of Poins, "Thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks, never a man's thought in the world keeps the roadway better than thine". But it would never suit our modern Poins to be praised for merely keeping the roadway; he must be credited with also pointing it out; and, to substantiate his claims of guiding the English people instead of merely divining the path which they will take, he must naturally affect more than mortal wisdom. His claim to be followed is that he is always right. And the *à posteriori* proof that the *Times* has been right harmonzies beautifully with this *à priori* claim to confidence. Everybody, it says, agrees with us; therefore we are right; everybody always has agreed with us, therefore we have been always right. The *Times*, like the figure-head of a ship, always leads public opinion; and, as we have always been following it, it must have been going in the same direction. The beauty of this is, that the *Times* in arrogating infallibility and consistency contrived to insinuate delicate flattery to its constituents. No one can deny a claim to consistency founded upon perfect agreement with his own past opinions.

So far then, the *Times* is only to be accused of passing off false

gems for true, affecting all the time to be a profound and an honest connoisseur. But a little reflection will show, what this pamphlet is intended to illustrate by a striking example—namely, the danger to which this course exposed us. In our ignorance of the cause of some great foreign convulsion, we judge of it partly by the way in which it affects our interests, and partly in accordance with certain traditional prejudices. There must be something radically wrong in a war which affects our supplies of cotton; and we cannot credit with any heroic virtues, a race which chews tobacco and wears bowie knives. Judgments really determined by shallow prejudices can only be supported by constant perversion of the facts. Ignorant people, even though they affect to be infallible, can pervert facts with genuine unconsciousness. They deduce their premises from their conclusions without the least guess that they are illogical. It is only necessary to fix the attention from [on?] the set of facts that makes for the side they have taken, and to shut their eyes to all others. Thus the next step of our infallible expounder of national opinions is to lay down authoritatively a theory, intended not so much to be accurate, as to serve as some justification for that which has come by a kind of accident to be the popular opinion. The evil which follows from this is obvious. The American naturally believes that the *Times* is, in fact, the authorized mouthpiece of English sentiment. He credits it with all the mysterious knowledge which it claims to possess, and assumes that in listening to it he hears the matured opinions of the most educated and reflective minds of England. Finding a complete perversion of his case, he naturally again attributes it to malice rather than ignorance. He cannot believe that such pretended wisdom covers so much emptiness; and he attributes to wilful falsehood what is at worst a desire to flatter its readers, overriding a love of severe historical truth. Our American thus assumes very falsely, though very naturally, that the English people hate him, abuse him, refuse to see his merits, and knowingly accept the vilest caricatures of his purpose; he does not understand that we have stumbled into mistakes, and that our

blunders have been pampered and exaggerated by our flatterers. He would naturally reply by abuse to our abuse; even if his own press had not already acted with as much recklessness and want of principle as the *Times*. And so the good feeling, for which all should wish, is hopelessly destroyed for a time.

In explaining the process more in detail, I hope I may render some slight service towards producing a better understanding. I cannot see the force of a late piteous appeal of the *Times* "to let bygones be bygones". It is sufficiently impudent after abusing a man incessantly, and being mistaken in all you have said, to request him to forget all about it. "I have been spitting upon your Jewish gaberdine, calling you misbeliever, cutthroat dog, and other pretty names for four years; but now— I freely forgive you."

This, however, I leave the *Times* to reconcile with its own lofty sense of dignity. I wish bygones to be bygones, as between the English and American peoples, for I think that each has misunderstood the other. The most effective way of securing this result would be to throw our Jonahs overboard, to upset the credit of the mischief-makers who have interfered between us, and to withdraw our countenance from the blustering impostor who has been speaking all this time in our name without any due authority. Two men sometimes quarrel because each has been barked at by his neighbour's cur, and fancies that his neighbour has set it on. The best way of making peace is to prove that, after all, it is nothing but a dog barking.

II. The "Times" as a Prophet

IF a man may be pardoned for prophesying at all in political matters, he may be pardoned for making frequent blunders. No human intelligence can unravel the complicated play of forces by which the fate of nations is determined; and yet much may be learned from a man's prophecies. They show us by im-

plication what view he takes of the present, though they may throw very little light on the future. If a man should tell us that Heenan was certain to beat Sayers because he had drawn first blood, we should set him down as a bad judge of prize-fighting. His prophecy would prove him ignorant of the very conditions of the noble art, or ignorant of the strength of Sayers' constitution. By quoting a few prophecies from the *Times*, it will, I think, be tolerably evident that it had completely omitted from its calculations some element which ought to have been taken into account. There is one other point to be noticed. The *Times* may reply to some of its adversaries—"We both prophesied in the dark, and though your prophecy came right and mine wrong, that is nothing to boast of". This excuse will hardly serve to account for the fact that the *Times* had prophesied the success of the South as confidently as the success of the North, and for the further fact that it has always boasted of its consistency and foresight. I will quote a few of its vaticinations:

Nov. 26, 1860.—"It is evident, on the smallest reflection, "that the South, even if united, could never resist for three months "the greatly preponderating strength of the North."

April 30, 1861.—It hopes that "the certain failure of all at- "tempts at coercion will be discovered by the Washington Gov- "ernment soon enough to save the country from being drenched in "blood."

May 9. 1861.—"The reduction of the seceding States is an "almost inconceivable idea."

July 18.—"No war of independence ever terminated unsuc- "cessfully except where the disparity of force is far greater than "it is in this case," and (July 19) "We prefer a frank recognition of "Southern independence to the policy avowed in the President's "message, solely because we foresee, as bystanders, that this is the

"issue in which, after infinite loss and humiliation, the contest must result.

The character thus indicated of the philosophic bystander seeing things more clearly than was given to the foolish and pig-headed Northerners who persisted in going their own way, was perhaps that in which the *Times* most delighted to appear.

Aug. 27.—It appears in the same character, modified by a stronger dash of the profound philosopher. England, it says, might as well attempt to conquer France, or, indeed, better; for the Northerners are not (as we should, of course, be in the case supposed) agreed among themselves. The only parallel in history is the French invasion of Russia, but Napoleon had far greater resources than the North, and the South is far stronger than Russia. "We are in a condition to give advice," which is, in short, for North and South to part friends. The *Times* never could learn, though incessantly burning its fingers, to keep clear of these dangerous historical parallels.

By the beginning of 1862 it had become still more confident. January 14, 1862, it declares that this was a case "in which success was only possible with overwhelming odds; but here the odds were all on the Southern side." As throwing some light upon this audacious assertion, I may quote the *Times* of September 24, 1862, where, in anticipation of Maryland rising to join Lee, it says, that the South have at this moment more than half the total population on their side; and it makes a rough calculation, apparently in utter ignorance of the census, and certainly in the flattest contradiction of it, of the rival forces. There were, it says, twelve millions on the side of the North, nine on the side of the South, and eight millions "between" who are now gravitating to the Southern side. Now, as in all the Slave States, including the Border States, which never left the Union, there are only just twelve millions, and as

there are nineteen millions of distinct Northern population, the *Times* has here been cooking its facts in a manner quite beyond my powers of arithmetic. On April 30 it had spoken of "a dozen great territories, with eight million inhabitants, as warlike as any on the face of the globe." September 30, it proved that the blockade must be ineffective and could only slightly raise the price of cotton. "If the war were only safe to last, we can imagine no surer way of making a fortune than by setting about to baffle its Custom-house officers and cruisers",—a silly remark enough, because the chance of making a fortune necessarily implies a great risk, but illustrative of the predictive powers of the *Times*. Six months afterwards (Mar. 8, 1862) it was engaged in proving that the blockade was already effective.

Jan. 15, 1862.—The *Times*, perhaps, culminated as a prophet, "How long," it inquired, "is this to last? Not long enough for the conquest of the South. Shall we give the volunteers two months as the period necessary to enlighten them as to the difference between paper dollars and silver dollars? It will be ample time. We need not give the contractors nearly so long.... The army of the Potomac will melt away insensibly, or, if it be so unfortunate as to be down South, it will die away unfed and unsuccoured in the swamps of Secessia. The beginning of the end has come." The *Times* announced that it was impossible to carry on war (that is, as it explained afterwards, "offensive war") upon paper money; and a collapse would necessarily follow in two months. Truly, prophets should read history.

A singular thing now happened. The North perversely, and in utter disregard of the *Times*, took New Orleans, Fort Donelson, Newberne, Beaufort, and other places, and seemed to be carrying all before them. The *Times* at once showed, as I shall have hereafter to remark, several signs of conversion to their cause. For the present I need only mention its prophecies.

March 31,—It confesses with interesting frankness that all calculations (all its calculations) had gone wrong "on account of the unexpected and astonishing resolution of the North, of which it would be unjust to depreciate the spirit, etc." We failed to sympathize, "not that we sympathized with slave-holders or approved the wilful destruction of a great political fabric, but that we thought the fact accomplished and its reversal beyond possibility."

The resources of the North have now begun to tell. They are twenty millions to ten, and can command the sea. (On July 21, four months later, they speak contemptuously of "the few shallow reasoners in this country, who are always telling us that twenty millions must in the end beat ten millions"— "a silly fallacy" which had received a practical refutation in McClellan's defeat.) The slaves had not risen, as was predicted. As for finances, "it is beyond all question that the North is getting on smoothly enough for the present". Still, if the South persevered, they must establish their independence.

May 28.—"That the Federals have established an ascendancy in the field is beyond all question". "The whole story is a mystery as well as a marvel. It is almost as hard to believe what has occurred as to imagine what may ultimately happen". To call a thing a mystery is to make two assertions: one, that you don't understand it yourself; the other, that no one else understands it.

June 28.—After a long discussion of the war it comes to the conclusion, "the superior numbers and resources of the North we look upon as certain in the end to prevail".

Directly after so positive an assertion, and shortly after a declaration, that the whole story was a "mystery and a marvel", I am not surprised to find the *Times* recover its complacency at a bound. McClellan's expedition was at a standstill.

July 3, 1862 —"We", it says, "have been right, and the North" wrong in so many things that our opinion is at any rate

entitled "to consideration". "We" means England, with the exception of an insignificant minority, and, of course, as interpreted by the *Times*.

And for the next two years and a half, it prophesies with unabated vigour in the old direction. The only pause was during the spring of 1864, and is to be attributed probably to the Schleswig-Holstein difficulties which attracted the public attention.

I will give a few specimens, though many are unnecessary, as models of pointed, vigorous, and unfulfilled prediction.

Sept. 11, 1862.—The talk of putting down the rebellion, punishing treason, "putting down and crushing out rebellion, is mere verbiage".

Jan. 17, 1863 (in answer to Mr. Bright).—"We have committed the unpardonable crime of giving the Government of the Northern States credit for some good sense and humanity. We have predicted that sooner or later the North must see that its enterprise is hopeless, and that it must submit, as the mother country submitted eighty years ago. We have been mistaken thus far, not in the fortunes of war, not in our calculation of the Confederate strength or weakness, not in the cost of the war or the condition of American finance, but in the one single hope that the Federals would see what all the world except themselves see".

March 19.—"They might as well try to save it (the Union) as the Heptarchy."

The next day is a very pretty specimen of the genuine *Times* mixtures; a little fine writing, a good deal of arrogance, and a spice of unmixed abuse all delivered from the "philosophical bystander" point of view.

May 28.—People "naturally asked whether the gentleman was to rule in the old world and the opposite character in the new. It is vain to look for those higher principles from which alone we

might expect any settlement of the question.... If they persist in the rule of might, there is only one result, they will just annihilate one another. A miserable remnant, a ruined country, a relapse into savagery, and other evils unknown and inconceivable will be the only possible result.... From this vantage ground" (that of the British Constitution) "we tell these poor drowning wretches that they have no chance whatever, but to forget their dream of infinite numbers, of boundless territory, of inexhaustible wealth, and irresistible might, and bow low like children to the teaching of right. Let them just consider what they ought to do, and what 'ought' means, and have some chance of getting out of this difficulty without blasting a whole continent. We do not say this is an easy or altogether a pleasant course, but it is the only course that does not lead to utter destruction".

The poor wretches would not drown, but the *Times* was not disheartened.

July 21.—"We forecast very naturally and pleasantly that as reunion is impossible, and the only object of fighting is to have the last blow, the winning side would be glad to make a kind and generous use of its advantage."

Aug. 31.—We find the philosophic bystander again: "In every civil war the combatants have been blind to prospects that every bystander could foresee, and we suppose this terrible and cruel struggle will linger on till the North has no means left to fight, and the South nothing but freedom left to fight for".

Oct. 19.—We come across a new and ingeniously accurate historical parallel. "It will be found as impossible to overwhelm the native levies of men of English race fighting for their lives and possessions" (a delicate periphrasis for slaves) "by any number of foreign hirelings, as it was for Carthage with the greatest general the world ever saw at the head of her armies, and the wealth of the world at her command, to hire Gauls, Spaniards, and Numidians

enough to break down the stubborn spirit of the less ably led Roman militia. A nation fighting for its liberty may not come victorious out of the conflict, but history affords no example that we are aware of, of an invasion and subjection of a warlike people by an invader who scarcely ever was enabled to sleep on the field of battle and whose constant boast was not that he had routed his enemy, but that he placed his army in safety".

Dec. 24.—"Yet, though we greatly underrated" (as is now evident) "the difficulties of the North, the opinion was almost universal that subjugation of the South was impossible. Even when the North has surrendered her liberty and beggared her finances, she will not be able permanently to hold these immense countries and keep down their hostile populations on these terms".

In the early part of 1864 prophecies became rare, as I have already remarked. Although the *Times* vehemently denied any value to the Northern successes, it probably felt that the taking of Vicksburg and the battle of Gettysburg had changed the aspect of the war.

Its spirits, however, gradually recovered, and it asserts—

May 3.—"The present prospects of the Confederates in this fourth year of the war are brighter than ever before".

July 5.—The failure of George III. was not more complete "than that which the contemplation of affairs in the middle of 1864 shows us to have attended the efforts of the Federal Government."

The next is a specimen of a pleasant figure of speech by which the *Times* occasionally describes itself as "all Europe":—

Aug. 22.—"The North must see that it is persisting in an enterprise allowed by all Europe to be hopeless, and proved to be so by events up to the present time.... In Europe we can only employ the lessons of this unnatural conflict to confirm our convictions of the hopelessness of the war and the necessity of a speedy peace".

Sept. 14.—"The public will admit that they have not been misguided by our comments. The great fact which we asserted from the first is now" (six months before the end of the war) "placed beyond the reach of controversy. We said that the North could never subdue the South, and the North has now proclaimed the same conclusion". (This refers to the Chicago Convention).

Oct. 10.—"Ruin stares the Union in the face if the war is to be conducted by General M'Clellan, and if it be conducted by President Lincoln the result must be precisely the same".

Nov. 12.—The *Times* made an unintentionally good hit:

"The subjugation of the Confederacy must be deferred by the most sanguine Republican to the spring of 1865".

Dec. 14.—"To negotiation it must come at last, and the sooner the inevitable resolution is taken the better it will be for America and the world.... We, the bystanders, saw things more clearly than the actors, and we see them more clearly now".

Feb. 22, 1865.—After explaining that Americans suffer from a certain "monomania" of devotion to the Union, it adds:—

"So long as that idol stands on its pedestal the war must rage on, and we see no prospect of its early termination."

The *Times* was evidently not quite confident, however, and it endeavoured to effect a strategic movement, of which the nature will appear from the following extracts:—

March 6.—Sherman's "unexampled successes" expose him to a serious embarrassment. "He takes these towns one after another, but they are no use to him when taken. He is experiencing a difficulty which was always foretold. The Federals have regained their military reputation; but, if the South shall resolve to stand out to the end, they have made but little progress towards the conclusion of the war."

Its spirits gave way for a moment, and it confesses, March 8, "The end is not far: the cause is simply bleeding to death". Once more it rallied.

March 14 —"Everybody in Europe" (I have already explained that this is a circuitous formula for "we" in the *Times*) "thought that the military ascendency which Sherman has at length established would have been secured by the North in a single campaign; but what, it was asked, would be done then? and that is the question before us now". Or, as it says more fully in answer to a speech of Mr. Bright's,—

March 15.—"We thought that the North would instantly overrun the South, etc., etc. These things are only now beginning to come to pass. They have come to pass much later and in a much less degree than we had anticipated; but then we thought, and still think, that the real danger and difficulties of the conflict would begin.... It remains to be seen whether we are wrong in these anticipations. When we are shown to be so, it will be time to taunt us with our mistakes" (though it thinks Mr. Bright has made too many to throw the first stone). "At any rate, we are not yet convinced of our error, and need something more than Mr. Bright's oracular assertion to prove it".

Mr. Bright has quite a peculiar talent for striking flashes of nonsense out of the *Times*.

My concluding passage is not exactly a prophecy:

April 19.—"The catastrophe seems complete, and in all its accessories calculated to impress people with a feeling that the work is accomplished, and that the Civil War is really at an end."

I lay little stress upon the fact, taken by itself, that the *Times* prophecies came absurdly wrong. But I say that its errors were of a class which, besides the ordinary measure of human fallibility, implies a total misconception of the conditions of the struggle. An

astronomer's prediction of an eclipse might fail from a mere arithmetical blunder; or it might fail because his calculation assumed a wrong configuration of the solar system. Thus the *Times* believed, or at least it occasionally asserted, that the South had actually greater resources than the North. It maintained that the North could not continue the war for two months, on account of financial exhaustion. In other words, it was as ignorant of statistics as of history. It failed to recognize the extraordinary resources of the North, or to remember that wars can be carried on with a depreciated currency. It is true that it contradicted itself flatly on both these points. The superior numbers and resources of the North were, as it said (June 28, 1862) certain to prevail; and as it kindly observed (August 15, 1862), "it is a mistake to suppose that money or credit, or tolerable supplies of food, clothing, and ordinary comforts are necessary to the work of cutting throats, blowing up trains, and burning houses"; in other words, it was driven to a paroxysm of abuse, by discovering that the Northern credit had not collapsed nor the war ceased on account of a suspension of cash payments. But the incessant predictions which I have quoted are doubtless founded upon the assumptions of Northern weakness in resources and in credit, and they, therefore, imply an error, not merely in calculation, but in knowledge of the primary data.

The great mass of prophetic matter in the *Times* thus implied a false conception of the facts. But it was incapable of even holding steadily to one conception. Before the war began, and in the spring of 1862, its prophecies were diametrically opposite to its prophecies at most other periods. In the spring of 1864 it was neutral. The *Times*, in 1860, anticipated Mr. Seward's prophecy that the North would conquer the South in ninety days. In 1861 it prophesied that the North would abandon its attempts in sixty days. And (November 4, 1862) it endorsed Mr. Jefferson Davis's assertion that the war could be carried on in Virginia for twenty years after the capture of Richmond. Mr. Seward was wrong, and

Mr. Davis was wrong; the *Times* had the curious felicity of combining both blunders.

The explanation of this doubtless is, that the *Times* had no fixed theory whatever. It looked on like an ignorant person at a game of whist, knowing nothing of the hands, and therefore crying out as each side took a trick or played a trump that it was certain to win the rubber. It would not believe that, in order to hold its own, the weaker side had played out all its strength, while the stronger had still its best cards in reserve. And thus, while the South was sinking in the final struggle, the *Times* became more confident than ever. Whilst Grant held Lee within the lines of Richmond and Sherman pierced the heart of Georgia, the *Times* was confidently pronouncing the war hopeless and actually pluming itself in unconscious absurdity upon the confirmation of its sapient predictions. Like a man in a dark room, it knocked its head straight against the wall, without even putting out its hands to save itself.

III.—Slavery and the War

I HAVE, I hope, raised a *prima facie* presumption that the *Times* was labouring under some delusion. It had omitted some element from its calculations, sufficient to distort the whole history of the struggle. The story, to use its own words, was "a mystery and a marvel;" it was a mystery and a marvel simply because the *Times* was not in possession of the one clue which led through the labyrinth. A foreigner looking on at a cricket-match is apt to think the evolutions of the players mysterious; and they will be enveloped in sevenfold mystery if he has a firmly preconceived prejudice that the ball has nothing whatever to do with the game. At every new movement, he must invent a new theory to show that the apparent eagerness to pick up the ball is a mere pretext; that no one really wants to hit it, or to catch it, or to throw it at the

wickets; and that its constant appearance is due to a mere accident. He will be very lucky if some of his theories do not upset each other.

As, in my opinion, the root of all the errors of the *Times* may be found in its views about slavery, which lay, as is now evident, at the bottom of the whole quarrel, I may be pardoned for recalling very shortly some well-known and not generally recognized truths. I shall then be able to show how the *Times* treated them, and how, by cutting out the central knot of the difficulty, the whole skein fell into hopeless entanglement.

All candid men will admit that the cause of the American war lay in the question relating to slavery. So many other issues were raised beyond the simple one of abolition or non-abolition, and so many political principles were inextricably interwoven with the question of how to deal with slavery, that interested persons were enabled for a time to impose upon ignorant and superficial observers. Those who judged merely from the confused cries that rose at every moment from the battle-field, instead of inquiring into the antecedents of the conflicting parties, might be easily deceived.

That slavery was in some sense the cause of the war rests upon evidence equal to that which would satisfy the rigid requirements of physical philosophy. By a simple inspection of the map, it appears that the great rent which divided the Union coincided with the lines between slaveholders and non-slaveholders, and coincided with no other line of division. It divided States, it split masses homogeneous in their agricultural or other commercial interests, but throughout its whole length it divided slavery from free labour.

More than this, the repulsion between the opposing masses varied in direct proportion to the degree in which one was, and the other was not, infected with slavery. The centres of the slaveholding interest were the centres of secession. The districts where slavery was dying out were divided in their allegiance. Those where it was legally or practically extinct were unanimous for the Union.

More than this, again, the conflict of interest had led to discussions prolonged over a generation. More eager and vigorous debates had never raged upon any subject.

Those debates had turned exclusively upon the compromises which might reconcile the rival interests of slaveholders and free men. From Jefferson to Clay every American statesman had pointed to slavery as the rock upon which the Union was predestined to split. Every compromise that had been devised to reconcile the two sections turned upon slavery, and slavery exclusively. The Missouri compromise, the compromises of 1850, the compromises that were elaborately discussed at the instance of the Border States on the eve of secession, and with a view to avoiding it, all bore upon slavery, and upon nothing else. To put all this out of sight required stupendous ignorance, or equally stupendous impudence. There was, however, one chance of confusing the question. The Abolitionists in the North held slavery to be an accursed thing, to be attacked at the sacrifice of the Union, or of any merely human institution. The Democrats held that New York could no more interfere with slavery in South Carolina than with slavery in Brazil. The Republicans differed from both parties by holding that the powers of the Constitution enabled them to exclude slavery from the territories, and wished to use those powers so as incidentally to hamper and confine it within fixed limits. The Abolitionists and Republicans held slavery to be pernicious. The Democrats might or might not agree with them. The point upon which they necessarily differed was the right of the free section of the Union to attack slavery directly or indirectly; upon this question there might be any number of shades of opinion. Now it was possible to confound an unwillingness to attack slavery by unconstitutional means with an unwillingness to attack it at all, and thus with indifference to it, or even direct approval of it.

All Englishmen, except habitual drunkards, object to intoxication. None but a small clique would legislate directly against

drunkards. It would be as unfair to accuse the *Times* of indifference to the evils of drink, because it respected individual liberty too much to legislate against drinking, as it was to accuse Democrats of necessarily sympathizing with slavery, because they respected State rights too much to attack it even directly. But it would be still more unfair to accuse a man of favouring drunkenness who should be in favour of limiting the spread of new public-houses whilst refusing to interfere with the old; and, in the parallel case, a sincere Republican could, by no honest man, be accused of indifference to slavery. We shall presently see that the *Times* made use of this contemptible sophistry to throw doubt upon the sincerity of the great mass of American parties. To complete the circle of abuse, it was only necessary to accuse the Abolitionists of fanaticism. A man who denounced slavery at all hazards was called an "exterminator" (their claim to this title has received a curious comment in the fact that the Abolitionists were amongst the most conspicuous advocates of mercy to Jefferson Davis); a man who opposed it indirectly, or not at all, was a hypocrite for preferring any other consideration to that of abolition.

And here I may add, that a further amount of doubt was thrown upon the motives of the Northern States by the fact that the chief motive of the great mass was not hatred to slavery, but love of the Union. No one can doubt that this was the case. Slavery was attacked, not as an evil in itself, but as the cause of evil to the Union; this is true, but it is a very bad reason for imputing insincerity to the assailants. I forbid my neighbour to get drunk, not primarily for his good, but because I am afraid that when he gets drunk he will break my head. This seems to be a very sensible motive. I am not arguing that Englishmen ought to sympathize with this worship of the Union; I am only saying that it was grossly unfair to cry out against the sincerity of anti- slavery zeal, because it was in most men's minds the result, and not the cause, of zeal for the Union.

Of the attempt to set up the tariff question as the real point at issue I need say little. That lie is dead. It is enough to remark that the tariff which favoured New England manufacturers or Pennsylvanian ironmasters, bore as hardly upon the West as it did upon the South, and still more certainly bore as hardly upon the parts of Virginia and Tennessee which adhered to the Union, as upon the parts which seceded. The line of separation everywhere followed the tortuous geographical line between slavery and free soil, whilst it cut at right angles the lines bounding opposite commercial interests. The burden, borne for the benefit of the East, weighed equally upon the West and South; as it caused no complaints except in the South, we may presume that their discontent was due to some deeper-lying influence.

I have endeavoured to lay down this sketch-map the better to exhibit the eccentricity of the course steered by the *Times*. Those who may differ from me as to the relations of some of the principles noticed, may still agree in appreciating the facility with which the *Times* can take them up or lay them down in every possible permutation and combination.

IV—Change of the "Times" Policy

ON the 4th of January, 1861, a letter upon the origin of the war appeared in the *Times*. The conclusions of the writer were summed up in these words, "Whether two systems of labour, one so dead, the other so full of life, can continue to live side by side is a problem which the United States are now attempting to solve for themselves". A historical sketch was given to prove that all political struggles in the States had hitherto turned upon the same question. The *Times*, accepting these conclusions, argued that Mr. Buchanan, the then President, put the question upon too low a ground. Mr. Buchanan, it says, assumed that slavery was indifferent, that New England had no right to discuss it. He never remarks, as it indignantly declares, that "what the

Free States require, they are morally justified in requiring, whilst what the slave States demand, they can demand only at the cost of justice and right". If the Union gave no right to discuss slavery, the Union would be so "unsubstantial and shadowy that it ought to be dissolved". But, of course, we "dispute the fact". The South was more responsible than the North for the previous agitation. We cannot disguise from ourselves that "there is a right and a wrong in this question, and that the right belongs, with all its advantages, to the States of the North".

During January and February, 1861, the *Times* stopped every logical avenue of escape for Southern advocates. It proved the South to be morally wrong. To put forward such claims necessarily implied a low moral standard. "The North", says the *Times* (January 8, 1861) "are for freedom of discussion. The South resist freedom of discussion with the tar brush and the pine fagot." The open avowal of such gross injustice could be accounted for only by the grossest ignorance. It was a kind of madness marvellous in a land of schools and newspapers; but "the mass of the people of the Southern States are in a state of deplorable ignorance", scarcely better than that of the Irish peasantry. The South Carolina manifesto was (January 19, 1861) remarkable for "utter falsehood". It proved that the State "was treading the path which leads to the downfall of nations and the misery of families". But had any one a right to stop them from following that path? The *Times* answered, yes. To the "specious plea" that the South might colonize as well as the North, carrying the "peculiar institution" with them, "the answer is obvious" (January 28): Slavery is in very truth a thing "hateful and abominable", and if the South should be so rash as to resist the constraints placed upon it, they would be answerable for the consequences. But the North were justified, not only on grounds of morality, but of expediency. It argues elaborately (January 18) that the North have the strongest reasons for resisting secession. If they gave way, the Union

would be broken into fragments, of which all the richest would fall to the South. (March 12).—If secession were permitted New York would probably set up as a free port. A doubt might still remain as to the constitutionality of Northern interference. Here the *Times* clenches the question by an argument, which would be indeed conclusive, were it not for its betrayal of the flimsy nature of its knowledge. (January 29, 1861)—In criticising a speech of Mr. Seward's, it expresses its delight at finding him at last occupying a ground which it is strange that American statesmen should only just have begun to perceive. It illustrates this ground by a pleasant fiction—of a proposal said to have been made some time ago for a simultaneous secession of South Carolina from the United States, and of Lancashire from England, to coalesce into a State based upon cotton and slavery. To such a proceeding we should naturally demur. In the case of Lancashire we should not go back to the agreement between Hugh Lupus and William the Conqueror. South Carolina would of course have no right to go back to the days of Pinckney and Washington. "So far as the Central Government is concerned, there is absolutely no difference." This is a vigorous statement of the principles of the old Federal party and of the doctrines which have now been demonstrated at the sword's point, But what follows is an example of an ignorant supporter trumping his partner's best card. The American people, says the *Times*, in their collective capacity have made the Government, and "left the remaining functions to be executed within certain territorial divisions called States.... Any individual seeking to destroy the central Government is guilty of treason against it, and the same thing is true of any aggregate of individuals, even if they should constitute a majority of a State or of several States." The *näiveté* with which these propositions are set forth, as something new to American statesmen, and the confidence with which the writer mistakes his own guesses for established facts, renders the whole argument inimitable.

So far the *Times* had pledged itself to these principles, that the South were attempting, and the North resisting, an iniquitous enterprise; that the North were bound, not only by morality, but by considerations of expediency, to resist it; and that under the Constitution they had the fullest legal power to resist it. It is not surprising after this that the *Times* (February 7) claims the gratitude of the Northern States for that exhibition of English good feeling which, as it modestly anticipates, will enable them to win back the Border States, and through the Border States the South; nor that it should (February 19) express a hope that "the force of political cohesion will be too strong even for the ambition and sectional hatred of a Charleston demagogue". Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Seward might have been satisfied with the principles of the *Times*, which, indeed, though not according to knowledge, were substantially identical with those of the Republican party. It was rather more outspoken with regard to certain Democratic weaknesses, although handling them with considerable tenderness, and as to the wickedness of slavery. But for a few slips such as that above noticed, it might have been supposed that the editor had secured writers who had really studied the subject, and that he was prepared to take a side founded upon some intelligible theory. It is always, however, easy for writers of such ability as those who form the staff of the *Times* to ape a language which they do not really understand. Like a clever swell-mobsman in polite society, they impose upon superficial observers; though a word or gesture at unguarded moments may expose the real amount of their knowledge. During March and April, 1861, this was illustrated by the curious perplexity induced in the *Times* by the appearance of the tariff question. Its New York correspondent assured it that the tariff grievance was a mere blind; that it had been lost sight of since 1846, and was now meant as a bid for foreign support. The *Times* hesitated. (Mar. 5).—Some people, it said, thought that the slavery question was a mere pretext. (March 8).—However, it considered that "the North was bringing discredit on the intrinsic merits

of their cause". The only point of similarity between this war and the war of independence was, that in both there was a dispute about customs duties. (March 9.)—If this tariff were once out of the way, we would soon show on which side our sympathies really are. "There are no disunionists", it emphatically observed, "upon this side of the water". (March 12).—It roundly declares protection is "quite as much a cause of the war as slavery". (March 14.)—Having heard of the compromise resolutions, it thinks that slavery is the chief cause. Protection was mere retaliation. (March 19.) —Slavery and tariff are on a par. (March 20).—It inclines to the South, because it has heard that the South are free-traders, and intend to suppress the external slave trade. The South, however, is reported to meditate an export duty on cotton. This "short-sighted policy" brings the *Times* back again; and, positively for the last time, it asserted without reservation that the North was in the right.

Two months of complete approval of the North were thus followed by two months of oscillation. The *Times* had "missed stays" in going about, and was pointing in rapid succession to any number of points of the compass. The discussion whether slavery or tariff was the real grievance is, at best, like a discussion whether Chichester spire fell down because the foundations were unsound, or because a wind was blowing. The commercial grievance was a cause, but an entirely subsidiary cause, which, except as acting upon an incipient schism, could have produced no effect. That the *Times* should put slavery and the tariff as co-ordinate causes, and that so shortly after fully stating the case as concerns slavery, shows strikingly the shallowness of its knowledge. Its ignorance follows not from isolated blunders, but from a want of any theory by which the observed phenomena may be combined into any sort of unity, It is like a rustic looking at a volcano, and wondering whether the explosion is caused by the fire or the smoke. The *Times* has often been compared to a weathercock, fancying

that it decides the way the wind blows. It should be added, that it is too low to feel the more permanent currents of the atmosphere, and swings round in obedience to every gust that eddies through Printing-house Square.

A complete change was about to come over its spirit, and the change nearly coincided with the fall of Fort Sumter. It distinctly opposed the Northern claims; May 7 appeared a remarkable article. "The North", it said; "may be justified in its denunciation of slavery, but it is not fighting for the purpose of driving slavery out of the land. The South may be justified in protecting its independence, but that independence was not assailed. Stripped of its pretexts and trappings, the war stands out as a mere contest for territory, or a struggle for aggrandizement. Something may be said for either side, most for the North; but nothing to justify civil war." And, quoting the great idol of English respectability, "Lincoln", it says, "and Davis have abruptly closed with an alternative at which the Duke of Wellington stood aghast," namely, civil war. If an Irish secession had broken out, and a party of Fenians seized the forts of Cork Harbour, the Iron Duke would undoubtedly have requested his erring brethren to part in peace.*

The change to the tone, of which the key-note was thus struck, was the great change of the war; and, as it was the cause of considerable criticism, it is worth while to examine a little into the apology put forward by the *Times* itself.

This was two-fold. It consisted, first, of a *tu quoque*. The fall of Fort Sumter startled the North out of its dream of concession and peaceful compromise. The *Times* had till then been in advance even of the Northern opinion. Its worst complaint against them had been that, owing to their democratic institutions (Jan-

*The *Times* was so much pleased with this article that it reprinted many sentences from it *verbatim* that day fortnight (May 21). Probably it thought that no one could remember a *Times* article for two weeks.

uary 24), they were deficient in loyalty to the Union. The insult to the national flag changed their spirit like magic. They showed an enthusiasm that amazed even their friends. If, to use the arguments of the *Times* itself, they had not opposed the wicked designs of the South, if they had not resisted the forcible subtraction of their most valuable territory, if they had not resisted a rebellion as clearly unlawful as the secession of Lancashire fom England, the *Times* would have been the first to call them poltroons and empty braggarts. As they showed unexpected spirit, the *Times* said, Pray give in at once; don't fight, whatever you do. When the Northern press complained of this sudden failure of support, the *Times* replied, "You were cool when we were hot; you can't complain of us for being cool now that you are hot. You were willing (June 11) to let your erring brethren part in peace. Whilst war was preparing, you were all for conciliation. Now that your enemy has given you a slap in the face, you have actually lost your temper. Itis nothing but wounded vanity (June 26). We did not cry out enough at your mighty *leveé en masse*; and now you profess anger at our reasonable change." This was a calming reply.

The *Times*, however, had a much better plea, and one which it constantly put forward, in the apparent belief that it afforded a full justification. It stated (see especially October 9 and November 14) that it changed on discovering the unexpected unanimity of the South. The Border States declared for the South upon the fall of Fort Sumter, and the *Times*, with characteristic prescience, saw that this rendered the struggle hopeless. It asserted, with every variety of vehement affirmation, that the North had no chance. I have already quoted some of these prophecies. The first, significantly enough, is on April 30. I have also given specimens from May 9, July 18, August 27, September 30, and to them I must refer. I am content to assume that the *Times* changed at the moment they saw the cause to be hopeless. It is a highly probable statement; and my only doubt of its entire accuracy arises

from its positive assertion of November 26, 1860, already quoted, that the South could not hold out for sixty days. Nothing had occurred to change the military prospects, although much had occurred to change the sympathies of the *Times*. Assuming, however for the present, that the *Times* correctly describes its reasons, I would remark that a desertion of the right side the instant you believe it to be the weaker side does not necessarily imply corrupt motives. A war which is a hopeless war is, for that reason alone, a wicked war. Advice against litigation may be perfectly judicious, although you believe that the litigant has the right upon his side. But two courses remain. An honest and well-informed man who had fallen into the same blunder as the *Times* concerning Southern invincibility, would have carefully grounded his advice upon the vanity of Northern hopes. He would not have changed his opinion as to the cause or the rights of the quarrel. A weak and superficial observer, on the other hand, would be certain to make two assumptions; one, that the side which for the moment is uppermost is certain to win; the other, that the winning side is necessarily in the right. It requires deep convictions to occupy Cato's position, to hold out against the charms of the *victrix causa*. An indolent mind is glad to bring its sympathies into harmony with its expectations; it drifts imperceptibly into approbation of the conqueror's arguments as well as his strategy, and then into a belief that it always did approve of them.

Applying this test, we can speedily judge of the merits of the *Times*. And as the best gauge of its deviations from its old path, I return to the slavery question. I have shown that the *Times* started with a very fair statement as to the relations of the war to slavery. On May 23 and May 24 appeared a long article from Mr. Motley, ably reasserting the principles from which they had so strangely departed. The *Times* would have none of it. It had said (March 28) that the only "point of contact" between this war and the war of independence was, that there were customs duties

in both. Now it asserted, May 23, that the spirit of George III had entered into the Northern people; and May 24, it repeated, in opposition to Mr. Motley, that the precedent of George III was applicable. "The North", it said, "seems to have a good cause, but it is surprisingly like the cause of England." It had gone further in an article by which Mr. Motley's letter was probably provoked. The war, it had said (May 11), was not one about slavery, but merely "to keep slavery as one of the social elements of the Union.... It was a war to keep Southern debtors and their property from getting beyond the grasp of Northern merchants". This ingenious theory completely turned the tables, and, as I shall show, was a favourite opinion of the *Times*. Presently, however, the *Times* made another change. Mrs. Beecher Stowe had made an appeal to the anti-slavery sentiment of the English people.

She said, very truly, that it was "an anti-slavery war, not in form, but in fact;" that "national existence and not emancipation was the announced battle-cry; but national existence was in this case felt to imply the extinction of slavery". (These words, though expressing a sentiment now commonplace, illustrate the great difficulty of the American government. To obtain foreign sympathy, they must have proclaimed a crusade against slavery; but, for the all-important purpose of securing unity at home, it was necessary to make love of the Union the watchword, as, indeed, it was the efficient motive.) The *Times* (September 9) quotes these remarks in Mrs. Stowe's own words, because it would "scruple to attribute to her views so little worthy of the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*". Mrs. Stowe, as it condescends to inform her, "has mistaken an electioneering cry for the war-note of a crusade". And with a ludicrous pomposity it lays down its own opinion. It was not "an accident", it admits, that the fracture took place at the point of juncture between slave and free States, though, if we define an accident to be an event whose cause is undiscoverable, it is hard to say what else it could be. The *Times*, however, continues:—"That this was

not the true object of the movement on either side, admits of every proof short of demonstration; that the slavery question has since been lost sight of in the melée of civil war admits of actual demonstration." Ten days before this was written (August 31) Fremont's proclamation freeing the slaves of disloyal owners had already been issued; and by all who had eyes to see (including Mr. Russell, the *Times*' special correspondent) was felt to be the first step towards an inevitable conflict. Upon learning of the proclamation the *Times* sapiently remarked (September 30), as if it was a novel, but not improbable, theory, that some people considered abolition to be at the bottom of the whole business. Without committing itself to this or the opposite opinion, it added that it was highly probable that abolition would be adopted as a war measure—not a very rash prediction, after abolition had actually commenced in Missouri, but a singular comment on its "demonstration" three weeks before that slavery had been already lost sight of.

The fullest confession of faith that I can find is contained in a review (January 14, 1862) of Mr. Spence's work*—a book remarkable for its power of varnishing over the ordinary Southern arguments with a thin coating of sham philosophy. The *Times* adopted his conclusions, and spoke (April 26, 1862) afterwards of Mr. Spence's "admirable work" as clearing up the subject. The *Times* following Mr. Spence, complacently attributes the war to the demoralization of the Northern people. That that demoralization, if it were proved to exist, should be ever spoken of by Englishmen, except in a tone of regret and humiliation, I consider to be a disgrace to the speaker. If millions of English-speaking people, brought up in the enjoyment of our laws, literature, and religion, are, indeed, corrupt to the core, we should repent in sackcloth and ashes. The *Times*, however, talks the usual talk about democracy, reckons up the burning of slaves, Lynch law, bullying in Congress, and other direct products of the slave power, as part of the Northern iniquities, and finally reduces the causes of the war to three

**The Recognition of the Southern Confederation.* By James Spence. London, 1862.

heads. The first is the change in the political balance due to emigration; the second, an "original antipathy" aggravated by Abolitionists; the third, the protective policy of the North. To repeat what I have already said, none of these causes can even be fully stated except as corollaries to the slavery question. Emigrants are naturally attracted by free labour; protective tariffs injured East Tennessee or Illinois as much as Eastern Virginia or South Carolina, but they only alienated the slave States. As for the "original antipathy", the statement about Abolitionists is sufficient to prove that it means an antipathy between free men and slaveholders.

The *Times*, however, argues that slavery is of no importance. "The reader will observe the clear distinction between slavery itself and the agitation for its abolition"—two things which I should have thought it impossible to confound. The *Times*, however, means in a blundering way to point out what it afterwards states as follows: "As a cause of secession, slavery is subordinate .... It may be the reel on which the evil has been wound; but it is not the material of which the coil is made; it is a delusion, if not a fraud, to represent it otherwise".

I don't quite understand the metaphor, but its general purport is plain enough.

The *Times* had thus asserted within a year that slavery was the cause of the war; that slavery was one cause and protection another; that slavery was the cause and protection a pretext; that slavery had little to do with the war and protection much; that it could be "all but demonstrated" that slavery had nothing to do with it at first, and "quite demonstrated" that slavery had since passed out of sight; that "some people thought" that abolition was at the bottom of the whole business, and that it would very probably be the result; and that slavery was the "reel on which the coil was wound", though "not the material of which the coil was made". In other words, the *Times* knew nothing about it. I shall show

directly that its opinions as to the effect of the war upon slavery were equally oscillating.

V.—The "Times" on the true cause of the war

I MUST at first, however, remark upon the attempts which the *Times* made to account for the war, leaving slavery out of the question. After such dogged determination to prove that the magazine did not blow up on account of the powder, it was bound to invent some other cause. For the *Times* always affects the philosophical. Preserving its equilibrium by a series of oscillations, it never falls into the fanaticism of either extreme. It eschewed the violent abuse of the Tory organs—except when abuse was really required—as religiously as it eschewed abolitionist declamations. "*Surtout point de zèle*"* was its motto, or, in other words, "no political principles at any price". Hence, the *Times* had to discover some working explanation of the war not involving slavery. It could not adopt the servant-maid's excuse that the vase "came broken", and the "three causes" enumerated by Mr. Spence were, of course, too absurd to be ever seriously mentioned again.

In the first place the *Times* said, as a philosopher is bound to say, that the separation was owing to far deeper causes than slavery. After pooh-poohing those shallow observers who could believe that a war between slaveholders and non-slaveholders might be in some way connected with slavery, it said boldly—(May 30, 1861)—"the inhabitants of the North and those of the South are two distinct peoples" of the same stock, as much opposed "as the Austrians to the Italians, or the Muscovites to the Poles". To test such assertions they should be inverted: it would be a singular remark that the Germans differed from the Italians as much as the people of East from those of Middle Tennessee. (Sept. 19, 1861.)—It proceeded to moralize upon this. The tendency in Europe is, it appears, rather "for large States to split asunder than for small ones

*Surtout pas trop de zèle. Talleyrand's phrase.—(Ed.)

to be consolidated", as may be seen in France and Italy. The cause of this tendency is that "nationality" is the great modern feeling. North and South have separated, because North and South have as little in common as Magyar and German. The logic of this is equal to the accuracy of its facts. If nationality is the ruling principle, North and South should keep together. The *Times* can only say roundly that they differ as much as Magyar and German. It never condescends to specify the differences which separate races identical in blood, language, religion, laws, and a few other characteristics, and for many years bound together in the same political and social organizations. A year later—(Jan. 23, 1863) the *Times* repeats its statement that slavery is only part of the difference, but, as before, it declines to state the other part. Some better explanation was required.

One might have supposed that the *Times* would have set the war down to that universal cause of all modern political events—democracy. People are apt to fancy that the mere mention of democracy gives them claim to be De Tocquevilles. The *Times* felt the temptation; but there were two objections to its yielding to it, first, democracy would not account for the precise line taken by the split, and was so far an irrelevant cause logically; secondly, the *Times* is a Liberal paper. Accordingly it adopted its usual plan of both asserting and denying democracy to be the cause. People are apt to declare themselves to be miserable sinners, and to deny that they have broken any one of the Ten Commandments in particular. By an inverse method, the *Times* denies in general terms that democracy was the cause of the war. In detail it constantly lays the blame upon the crimes generally associated with democracy.

"We", says the *Times* of April 28, 1862, "were never amongst those who exulted over the alleged breakdown of democratic institutions; we saw from the first that it was not so much democracy as the principle of Federalism, under very peculiar conditions, that

was on its trial". It had asserted more distinctly still (September 25, 1861), that it agreed with its correspondent, that the war was not traceable to democracy, and that it has not been forced by the mob upon the educated classes.

A fortnight before (September 12, 1861), in an argument which ingeniously combined various classes of blunders, it remarks:

"We say nothing of the sacrifice of free institutions, &c. &c., and certainly nothing of gentlemen being ridden out of town on a rail. King Mob, where he is supreme, will naturally require the same agent as any single tyrant". However, the *Times* hopes that the war will soon stop, because the mob in New York and elsewhere are already feeling the pressure of hunger.

May 24, 1861.—It had kindly remarked, that though the Southern statesmen could not be justified by any rule of law in breaking up the Union, law has not been the rule commonly prevailing in America, but "almost unrestrictedly the rule of self-will", In flat contradiction to the assertion of September 25, just quoted, it had said on August 14, 1861, "The war is the result of mob passions, and the real act of men who have comparatively little interest in the maintenance of union, order, national credit, or property itself."

The two lines are ingeniously combined in one article by an artifice of which the *Times* is specially fond.

"Far be it from us," it says, (October 18, 1861), "to dogmatize about democracy, or to attribute the Civil War to republican institutions. The secession of the South is certainly not a necessary result of any form of government. Yet it is not too much to say that the form which democracy has taken for the last thirty years, or since the Presidency of Jackson, was likely to lead to such a result." In other words, we won't distinctly say it, but we will hint it. It is common for Protestant advocates to disclaim any wish to

impute deliberate lying to Roman Catholics; but, they insinuate, if Roman Catholics did wish for an excuse, they might know where to find it.

It appears, I think, pretty plainly that the *Times* was in the position described by Mr. Tennyson, "sitting apart, holding no form of creed, but contemplating all," and, indeed, trying on each in turn. It did not really think that democracy was the cause of the war, but it could not help saying stinging things about democrats; it could not doubt that slavery had really something to do with it, but it tried by every means to evade the inevitable conclusion. Slavery was an awkward topic, and it went so far as it dared, which sometimes was very far indeed, in denying it to be involved in the quarrel.

VI.—The "Times on the Slavery Question

I WILL now trace shortly the treatment applied by the *Times* to the successive phases of the slavery question. It will appear, I think, that it did not escape the Nemesis common to all apologists for slavery. The Southern Confederacy fell because, in the words of its Vice-President, it was grounded upon the cornerstone of slavery. Their advocates have confuted themselves over and and over again by the strange contortions of argument forced upon them by the necessity of concealing this part of their client's case. They were constantly impaled upon the horn of a dilemma; they were bound to maintain either that slavery was a good thing, and that the South were fighting for it; or that slavery was a bad thing, and the Southern cause had nothing to do with it. The first assertion shocked the consciences of Englishmen, and the second their common-sense. As the war proceeded, each proposition became more untenable. By degrees, the change of opinion, which had been predicted by all impartial observers, developed itself. The temporizing and half-hearted dropped out, and the lead gradually fell into the hands of the extreme of each party. The *Times*,

indeed, admitted, as I have remarked, that abolition might be adopted as a war measure; and, after the event, it observed upon the transference of power to the most thorough-going partisans as a process naturally to be expected. But, as a rule, the *Times* showed its perception by asserting that the reverse of this process was taking place.

Thus (Dec. 14, 1861), it observes, in answer to Mr. Sumner, that the commercial classes in America depend upon slavery for cotton, sugar, and tobacco, and are, therefore, interested in maintaining it. Any opposition to slavery would divide the North into two parts— a good specimen of the method of reasoning from *à priori* considerations.

July 28, 1862.—It observes that, "So soon as it becomes evident that the South cannot be retained as a slave-owning portion of the Union, New York must naturally be against any further prosecution of the war—as also will be Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.... If Pennsylvania cannot sell her manufactures to the South, and New York cannot be the banker and broker of the planters" (which would, it supposes, follow from abolition), "their interest in the Union is gone. This accounts for the decay of the Union feeling in the Atlantic cities." And it frequently propounded a theory stated as follows (Feb. 16, 1863). One consequence of the emancipation policy is becoming evident. "The war, instead of crushing down the revolt of the South, has produced a movement for secession within what remained of the Union. Political opinion in the North-Western States is ripening to revolt".

I may therefore assume it to be the settled conviction of the *Times* (that is, an opinion which it does not flatly contradict oftener than three or four times), that emancipation policy, instead of being that to which the North would inevitably become reconciled, was likely to be the source of further schisms. But the *Times* was not contented with proving that the policy of emancipation was dis-

integrating the remnant of the Union; it insisted upon also proving at intervals that it was a perfectly nugatory pretext, and in process of abandonment by its authors. It was, doubtless, so anxious to get this awkward topic well buried, that it almost believed in the fulfilment of its wishes. Thus (September 9, 1861), it asserted, as I have remarked, that it would be proved to demonstration that slavery had gone out of sight.

April 3, 1863.—"Wholesale emancipation has ceased to rally the Republicans themselves." In place of it, a more genuine sentiment is appealed to; "a demand for the Union at any price, whatever the effect on slavery. It is thus that we interpret the spread of Union Leagues. Abolition is to be excluded from their platform, because it has been tried as a political engine and found wanting". "The proclamation will be virtually repudiated just as it has begun to bear its fatal fruits."

Nov. 14, 1863.—"The tenor of Lincoln's proclamation has been well understood by the coloured people. There is no disposition to desert the cause of the whites, and, furthermore, the idea of conquering the South by means of negro troops has been utterly abandoned."

Sept. 19, 1864.—It assures us, in an article to which I shall refer presently, that slavery is "no longer a point at issue, and will not be interfered with, after peace is restored".

The *Times* being thus eager to prove that emancipation was a policy which could not unite the North, and which was always being abandoned, though it persisted in always returning to life, it is curious to ask what it supposed to be the probable effect of the war upon slavery. I will quote a few passages to prove how plainly it had realized the bearings of this complicated question:—

May 9, 1862.—"The union is impossible except upon the basis of slavery; division is incompatible with the permanent existence of slavery". Or, as it still emphatically asserted—

October 7, 1862.—"We are in Europe thoroughly convinced that the death of slavery must follow as necessarily upon the success of the Confederates in this war as the dispersion of darkness upon the rising sun".

March 26, 1863.—Appeared an elaborate article, in which it is proved that, if the war fails, the South will become a great slave empire. "No doubt it would carry the institution of slavery into all its new territory, whether conquered or annexed, whether on the mainland or on the isles of the sea".

To explain this startling contradiction in terms of all that it had been hitherto saying, I must remark that the success of the South about this time had emboldened the *Times* to plant itself upon the more dangerous horn of the dilemma I have mentioned, and to declare that the South was fighting for slavery and that slavery was a good thing. "The race", it said, "vegetates in Africa, it rises to something better in the Southern States of America, it languishes in the Northern States, it has died out in this country". Though it may not be well off anywhere, it is at its best in the South.

December 18, 1863.—It is remarked that "if the Southern resistance is finally subdued, the institution will probably cease to exist".

Let me sum up these opinions: The *Times* "demonstrated", in September 1861, in a passage already quoted, that slavery had gone out of sight already, and was in no way affected by the war. In the first two passages quoted above it asserts that slavery will be destroyed if the North fail, and preserved if they succeed. In the last two it asserts that slavery will be preserved if the North fails and destroyed if they succeed. One other variation of opinion is possible, namely—that slavery will perish in any case. This view was elaborately maintained in an article of March 24, 1864. "It is very remarkable," it naïvely observes, "that the most con-

spicuous result of the American war is the gradual elevation of the black race in social and political position. As happens in all political revolutions, the most thoroughgoing party has proved the most enduring, and that party is the Abolitionist". If the restoration of the Union is hopeless, the destruction of slavery is not so. "It was pointed out, indeed, at a very early period of the war, that slavery could hardly escape from the double danger by which it was threatened. If the North were victorious they could do what they chose". (This, as it carefully explained, April 26, 1862, must be either the extirpation or expulsion of the blacks.) "If the South, they would be surrounded by free soil" (but, as shown, March 26, 1863, a slave power including "the Isles of the Sea"); and it proceeds to argue that the South will, by arming the slaves, obtain a numerical majority for the first time in the war. Perhaps the most direct contradiction to this article is the one of April 26, 1862, just quoted, where it is explained that the best chance for the negro is for the South to succeed, in which case the negroes will remain slaves as before. The same land will not hold the emancipated black and the slaveholding white. "The blacks must be re-enslaved, must be exterminated, or must be re-expelled". Should the North conquer, the question will be between the last two alternatives.

VII.—The "Times" on Emancipation Measures

I WILL conclude the subject of slavery by showing the nature of the criticism applied by the *Times* to the most prominent of the successive measures which marked the gradual adoption of an anti-slavery policy. Although the accumulated effect of those measures was too conspicuous to be evaded, it was just possible to misrepresent each taken separately. As we shall presently see that, according to the *Times*, the greatest military successes of the North were obtained by an unbroken series of defeats, it will appear that the old stronghold of slavery was stormed in a series of assaults, each of which was a dishonest feint or a step backwards.

In the beginning of 1862, Mr. Lincoln brought forward a plan for assisting any State to emancipate its slaves. He proposed that Congress should help in compensating the owners. If, he said, "the border States accepted this plan, slavery would be doomed, and the cause of the war removed".

The *Times* argued (March 24, 1862) that the plan was absurd. Slavery, it said, was still kept up in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri. (I have not been fortunate enough to find any recognition in the *Times* of the subsequent abolition of slavery in four of the five States named.) Hence, by some process of logic which is far beyond me, it inferred that "Mr. Lincoln has begun to entertain the idea so firmly entertained by every European politician that the only possible solution of the struggle is entire separation between North and South". I cannot, I say, follow the argument, but I am not surprised that the *Times* pronounces the scheme to be totally unintelligible.

It soon became evident that the scheme was not to be carried out. The *Times* then said (August 8, 1862) that Mr. Lincoln had wished to convert the border States into free-soil States, "well knowing and indeed avowing that the result of such a revolution would be their final detachment from the side of the South. The proposal itself was discreetly framed;....by such a decision the border States would have committed themselves to the principle of abolition, and have broken with slavery and the South once for all".

The *Times* characteristically shrank from admitting to itself the obvious nature of the proposal until the discovery that it was not to be practically tested.

In October, 1862, Mr. Lincoln announced that he should issue his emancipation proclamation in the beginning of 1863. He recommended at the same time to Congress a scheme for the compensation of loyal owners. As this great measure was perhaps the

most important step, and the crowning glory of Mr. Lincoln's life, I will venture to recall to notice one or two obvious facts which the *Times* systematically disregarded. The Northern generals had in the first instance so scrupulously abstained from interference with slavery, that they even restored slaves to rebel owners. General Butler hit upon the happy legal discovery that these slaves were "contraband of war"; whence arose the slang term of "contrabands" as applied to negroes. Now President Lincoln's proclamation was an extensive application of General Butler's argument. Its constitutionality may be disputed, but its justification was based simply upon the right of a commander-in-chief to appropriate the property of belligerents opposed to him. The very arguments, therefore, by which it was justified proved it to be inapplicable to the loyal States. Mr. Lincoln had no shadow of legal claim to emancipate their slaves any more than to seize their cattle, and he never in any instance put forward such a claim. As, at the same time, the emancipation of slaves in the planting States rendered slavery in the border States insecure, some measure for securing compensation to loyal owners, or to those who might submit before the proclamation came into action, was a natural complement to the proclamation. As a military measure, the proclamation struck at the weakest point of the enemy. The policy which it officially sanctioned was, in fact, forced upon the North by the logic of events. Wherever the Northern armies went, they freed the slaves at the cannon's mouth, and the proclamation confirmed and accepted the result. It acted like an acid, softening the hard-shell of Southern society, enabling the bayonet to penetrate. Southern society was, for the time, disorganized, to be reconstituted on a different basis. In the fact of that reconstitution lay the moral justification of the Northern enterprise, for it permitted the hope that the success won by arms might be consolidated by removing the very cause of irritation. The Northern armies administered a medicine potent enough, not merely to remove the symptoms, but to renew the constitution of the patient. But did not the procla-

mation incite to a servile war? In one sense it did, and in that sense a servile war is the holiest of all wars. If a man may not fight to raise himself from the level of a beast of burden to that of a man, it is hard to say for what cause he may fight. How is a man ever to be justified for shooting his fellow-men, if he may not shoot them when they have prevented him from marrying, from being educated, from receiving the wages of labour, and from all the rights of property? But, it is said, a servile war often leads to frightful atrocities. The brutified man takes the vengeance of a brute upon those who have degraded him. Massacres and outrages will follow the rebound from a fearful wrong; and holy as the cause may be, it may be accompanied by horrors so great as to quench our sympathy and to make us think the liberty of a race too dearly bought by such sufferings of one generation.

If, then, the war can be so organized as to be freed from these stains, if slaves fighting for freedom commit no more outrages than men fighting for commerce or for a diplomatic point of honour, they have the most imperative of all claims upon our sympathy. Before we refuse it, we should be certain that the horrors incidentally resulting will more than outweigh the blessings. But it is an admirable topic for thoughtless abuse to charge upon the abettors of a servile war all the atrocities that we instinctively associate with the name. It is easy to slur over the fact that such atrocities have not, in fact, occurred, and were not invited or provoked. Now, the warfare sanctioned by the proclamation was, I may unhesitatingly say, obnoxious to no such objections. Even their enemies have not attributed any special brutalities to the negro troops. They were less inclined to breaches of discipline than their white comrades. Nor, again, was the proclamation at any time intended to provoke a servile warfare of the atrocious kind; for the policy adopted simultaneously was, not to endeavour to raise the blacks in distant plantations, but to form brigades of fugitive slaves on territory belonging to the Union. Neither was there any probability that

the proclamation would unintentionally lead to sporadic insurrections in the South. For, besides that the proclamation could scarcely reach the remote plantations, it would be manifestly far more natural for a discontented negro to run off to a place where he could obtain arms and be effectually drilled, than to rise "promiscuously" in the midst of a population armed to the teeth. The proclamation tended to discourage such risings by promising a safe asylum for fugitives. The evident purpose of the proclamation, confirmed by all we know of the circumstances under which it was issued, of its plain meaning, and of the means by which it was carried out, was simply to give a legal sanction to a policy enforced by military, moral, and political considerations. Experience has confirmed this view, and it is, even at the present moment, the charter under which the negroes of the Southern States claim a right to freedom.

I will quote a few passages to show how the *Times* treated the measure to which, more than any other, is owing the most remarkable social revolution of our time.

Oct. 7, 1862.—Lincoln has declared that after January 1, 1863, "neither he nor his army will do anything to suppress *any* efforts which the negroes of the Southern States may make for the recovery of their freedom. This means, of course, that Mr. Lincoln will, on the 1st of January next, do his best to excite a servile war in the States which he cannot occupy with his armies.... He will seek out the places which are left but slightly guarded, and where the women and children have been trusted to the fidelity of coloured domestics. He will appeal to the black blood of the African. He will whisper of the pleasures of slaughter, and the gratification of yet fiercer instincts, and when blood begins to flow and shrieks come piercing through the darkness, Mr. Lincoln will wait till the rising flames tell that all is consummated, and then he will rub his hands and think that revenge is sweet".... "The South will answer with a hiss of scorn". New York and Pennsylvania will be-

come disloyal if slavery goes. "If Lincoln wants such a conquest as this, the North is perhaps yet strong enough to conquer Hayti". It is a mere proof of "impotent malignity", although there may be some "partial risings; for if any power publish an exhortation to the labouring classes of a community to plunder and murder, it will meet with some response".

Oct. 14.—The proclamation is an incitement to assassination. "In truth, it is nothing else, and can mean nothing else".

Oct. 21.—After some facetiousness about "Lincoln the Last", after pointing out that though "Honest Abe" had been honest to his party, he had been dishonest to his country, and how honesty in this sense (perhaps in some others) was an intolerable evil and a sufficient provocation to secession, and inferring "how insupportable must be despotism of which a man of this calibre is despot", it inquires, "Is Lincoln yet a name not known to us as it will be known to posterity? Is it ultimately to be classed among the catalogue of monsters, wholesale assassins, and butchers of their kind?" The *Times* thus charged Mr. Lincoln, in bombast worthy of the *Family Herald*, with all sorts of atrocities. There was, however, a fear that some weak haters of slavery on this side of the Atlantic might be attracted by the name of emancipation, and, indeed, a crowded meeting was held in Exeter Hall, and the sympathies of the English anti-slavery party was manifestly afflicted.

The Northern cause was so distinctly identifying itself with the profession of anti-slavery opinions that the *Times* could only take one of two courses. Either it might deny that slavery was an evil, or it might assert that the North was merely hypocritical in its assault. As usual, it did both. The first course required some courage. It made a bold stroke on January 6, 1863, in answer to some of the American Abolitionists. "They preach", says the *Times*, "with the Bible in their hands. In that book there is not one single text that can be perverted to prove that slavery is un-

lawful, though there is much which naturally tends to its mitigation, its elevation, and its final extinction". It then repeats the common special pleading as to St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon. "The only possible doubt about the exact meaning of his advice is whether slaves are to refuse their liberty even if it be offered, or whether they are merely to remain true to their masters even if chance presents opportunity of escape.... If it be said that slavery is at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, so are a good many things which are not yet laid under a ban of abolition or threatened with the war-power", *e.g.* purple and fine linen and good clerical incomes.

This article marks, I believe, the point at which the *Times* culminated. The amount of its anti-slavery sentiments at a given time is determined by the variations in the Northern tide of success. This was just after the battle of Fredericksburg. This defense of slavery—or attack upon Biblical morality—was, however, a little too much for the British public, and the *Times* retired towards its former position, that slavery was "in truth a hateful and horrible thing", though it still vigorously denounced emancipation. The palpable failure of this policy—for the article produced a general cry of disgust—led it to take the safer line of declaring that the North was not in earnest.

The *Times* therefore asserted (January 19, 1863) that the whole affair was a piece of hypocrisy intended for foreign consumption. "All the actors", it said, "are anxious to tell each other that this proclamation is Buncombe", specially Lincoln, but "no one in England imagines that the President....desires emancipation for itself". (No human being would now dare to doubt it.) The *Times* speaks of itself as hating slavery, but being "unmoved by all the stage tricks of Mr. Lincoln and his friends". "Mr. Bright is not such a simpleton as to believe in the benevolent intentions of Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Adams must have laughed heartily with himself at the few woodcocks who have been caught in his springes". This

last polished sarcasm refers to an address from the Anti-Slavery Society, congratulating Mr. Adams on the proclamation.

Feb. 6, 1863.—"Of all the hypocrisies", it says, "which have scandalized the world within our memory, the pretext that this war is being carried on for the benefit of the negro" (no one asserted that it was carried on primarily for his benefit) "is the greatest. It is a gross palpable imposture". An army of 150,000 negroes having been mentioned: "We all know what that means; it means 10,000 domestic tragedies, and a political sham which seeks to perpetrate a hideous crime".

Feb. 19.—The Anti-Slavery Society is compared to a society for the abolition of captivity in the Zoological Gardens; and, continuing in this vein of metaphor, their leaders are said to be small dogs barking in the dens of the old lions Wilberforce and Clarkson. This will probably be a sufficient specimen of the *Times*' abuse. I will notice one or two palpable misrepresentations of a similar class.

Oct. 7, 1862—"Where he has no power", says the *Times*, Mr. Lincoln will set the negroes free; where he retains power, he will consider them to be slaves".

I need not enlarge upon the absurdity of this constantly repeated statement. It depends upon a blundering notion that Mr. Lincoln had claimed power to abolish slavery or to free slaves on other than military grounds. In direct contradiction to the *Times*, it may be said that Mr. Lincoln freed the slaves where he had the legal power, and, of course, did not free them where he had not. But the *Times* systematically refused to see this.

Dec. 17.—It is amazed at a man, "as autocratic as the Czar", talking about Constitutional amendments. "The scheme", it said, "is very unlike the proclamation of three months since. It is a laboured substitute for the edict of September last". The fact is that it was a natural corollary, as I have shown.

Dec. 29, 1862.—It asserts that the Northern Government is inconsistent, because, while seeking to identify the North in the eyes of foreign Powers with the cause of emancipation, it offered the retention of their slaves as "a premium to loyal slave-holders". That is, it did not attempt forcibly, and in defiance of all law and policy, to deprive them of their slaves, without offering compensation. To twist the non-infliction of a severe penalty into the offer of a "premium" is an ingenious logical feat. But the *Times* capped even this blunder.

It had been reported that Southern troops had shot certain negroes taken in arms. The *Times* (January 21, 1863) ingeniously remarked that Mr. Lincoln's abolition decree was fortunately illogical enough to give the negro security. "Under the Federal flag he is a slave with all the immunities of the servile condition". "If he can be held as a slave by one side, and shot as a free man by the other, his position is miserable indeed". There is something so muddleheaded about this, that I rather fear to put any interpretation upon it. It appears, however, to be the impression of the writer that any slave freed by Mr. Lincoln's proclamation immediately became a slave again on entering the Union lines, and was probably tossed up for by the first white regiment he met. If the *Times* did not mean this, its remarks are sheer nonsense. If it did, they are not materially better.

To conclude the subject of the proclamation, I will quote one or two further passages on its effect. I have already quoted a remarkable one of March 24, 1864, on the "gradual elevation of the black race", which, however, the *Times* appears to think a mere accident.

June 18, 1863.—It says, "We shall be surprised if the presence of black regiments be not found a heavy loss to the present army, and a grievous loss to the enlistment of a new one". Within a week (June 23, 1863), it admits that the consequences of the

emancipation measure are becoming "important enough", the enlistment of negroes being in progress in Louisiana. This admission seems to be made to prove that horrible atrocities will result.

Certain atrocities were soon reported, but practised not by, but on, negro troops. Mr. Lincoln answered by a declaration that if the Confederates massacred black prisoners he must retaliate. The *Times* admits (August 17, 1863) that he could not do otherwise, but lectures him on the wickedness of the proclamation which made such measures necessary. Don't call in a policeman, or you may make the mob angry.

It declared (I have already quoted some passages) that the policy was a failure, and speedily to be abandoned. (December 31, 1863).—It asserts that "Mr. Lincoln's proclamation has not fulfilled the hopes of its authors, because it has not caused the servile insurrection which was justly deprecated by its opponents' policy". It admits that large numbers of slaves have been liberated, though, by the army, and not by the proclamation, and adds "if the Southern resistance is finally subdued, the institution will probably cease to exist". In other words, it admits that all its own predictions as to the probable effect of the proclamation have been falsified—that no atrocities have resulted, and that slavery is being extinguished. As for the quibble about the "army", the very purpose of the proclamation was to legalize the action of the army. But, whilst admitting that Mr. Lincoln's avowed expectations have come true, and its own been falsified, it persists in attributing to him other intentions of secret malignity which have been disappointed.

The candour of this article, which is one of the annual summaries of the *Times*, corresponds to a certain superiority in its tone. It soon relapsed. (January 5, 1864)—Mr. Lincoln having stated that 100,000 negroes were already in the military service, the *Times* coolly assumed that not more than 100,000 had been

liberated in all. The falsehood of this may be guessed from the fact that their own correspondent (January 29) tried to prove that not more than half a million negroes had been freed. I am not aware that the *Times* ever retracted its error, but it found a more convenient line of argument by asserting, not that the North had no negro troops, but (February 17) that their armies were entirely composed of negroes and foreigners.

I will give two further illustrations of the candour of the *Times* in this matter of slavery. Society being thoroughly disorganized in Louisiana, General Banks put out a scheme for establishing temporary relations between freedmen and their former masters. I need not argue as to whether the scheme was carried out in good faith, nor whether it was to be considered as a step backwards towards slavery or forwards towards freedom. I will only remark that it clearly defined an intermediate state of things. The chief points in which Banks's regulations made the freedman differ from the slave were these: the freedmen were to have a right to schools, to a piece of ground for themselves, to wages at a fixed rate, to choose their own masters, to receive support from Government if incapable. They were not to be flogged, and could not be sold or separated from their families. No one regulation can be mentioned which placed them at a disadvantage as compared with slaves.

The *Times* quietly asserts (March 3, 1864) that this scheme is in substance identical with slavery, and by May 17 maintains that it has restored slavery in an aggravated form. Between these two days (March 24) occurs its proof that the most conspicuous result of the war is the elevation of the black race.

By the end of 1864, it was abundantly evident that the war was crushing out slavery. Mr. Seward took advantage of this to say that slavery was no longer in question. Both Republicans and Democrats might, as he said, look upon abolition as an accomplished fact.

The *Times* hereupon said (September 19, 1864), after quoting his assertion that slavery was no longer at issue: "The Republicans have played with slavery, as they have played with other questions". Lincoln thought the Abolitionists might be useful, and went so far as to make abolition (in his message to the delegates in Canada) a condition for the readmission of the South. (I need hardly add that he never swerved from this.) The *Times* proceeds to say that Seymour denounced him, and Seward has followed suit; it denies that slavery was any longer the point at issue, and says that it would not be interfered with after peace was restored. It quotes Mr. Seward's speech in the same sense—(November 26).

That is, Mr. Seward said that a stipulation for killing slavery was useless, because slavery, if not dead, was mortally wounded. The *Times* made him say that a stipulation was not required, because he did not care whether it lived or died.

I have done with the mass of contradicting utterances concerning slavery. Let me draw one or two conclusions. I do not set this done to malice, for malice would be more consistent. The *Times* vacillates too much to obey the great commandment: "Tell a lie and stick to it". It rather proves, what no one doubts to be the case, that the *Times* takes in its politics as improvident people take in their coals, by the day, and has little thought either for the morrow or for the day before. Its only consistent effort was to avoid the unpleasant necessity of allowing that slavery was concerned. As it had drifted, from various causes, into a general attitude of hostility to the American people, it would not make the most obvious admissions of a Northern tendency. Yet if the *Times* had given the devil his due, it might have attacked him with more force. Its line of argument would have been more consistent and had more appearance of candour. It might have made a tolerable case out of the States' Rights argument, had it not been obliged always to exhibit itself in the attitude of one wriggling out of an awkward dilemma. A little honesty would have paid in the long

run. The British public were quite prepared to hear the truth about slavery, and the *Times* would have gained in reputation from the unwonted credit of sticking to the truth when the truth was under a cloud. It ought to be honest even with a view to its reputation; to quote its own courteous language, would it not be well for it to think sometimes what "ought" means?

VIII.—The "Times" Correspondence

I HAVE shown into what perplexity the *Times* was thrown by its constant misconception of the relations of slavery to the origin of the war. It would not admit that slavery was in any sense the cause of the war, or, I should rather say that, after its conversion in 1861, it would only make that admission in one of its occasional paroxysms of self-contradiction—and, at the same time, it could allege no other cause. I shall now endeavour to point out how much the same error distorted its view of all subsequent facts.

The *Times* was, I believe, more honest than most persons suppose, because it was more ignorant than common readers can easily be persuaded to believe. It is, therefore, necessary to explain, before proceeding further, the process by which its judgment on American affairs was apparently formed, as I cannot otherwise do justice to either its ignorance or its honesty. The *Times* began by sending out to America a gentleman for whose impartiality and powers of description every one must feel a high respect. During 1861, his letters, although in my opinion frequently expressing erroneous judgments, were highly graphic, interesting, and invariably gentlemanlike. Mr. Russell, however, left America in the spring of 1862, on not being permitted to accompany M'Clellan's Peninsula expedition. Occasional letters were afterwards published from a Southern correspondent, of whom I shall only say that a little more information, with a few less sentimentalities about Lee and Jackson, would have improved the substance of his writing, though they might have made his presence less acceptable

to the Southern authorities. From the moment at which he commenced his letters, he became (if he had not previously been) a thorough partizan of the Southern cause. The *Times* also employed a special correspondent during part of 1863 and 1864. His letters were unfavourable to the North, but evidently candid, and, therefore, such as no Northern sympathizer should condemn. From the beginning of 1862 until the present year, the *Times* has maintained at New York another correspondent. It had been originally my intention to treat this gentleman's letters at some length. I do not, however, think them worth the labour, because they were in themselves feeble, and because the degree to which the *Times* is responsible for them may be doubted. I will in a few words give my impression of them, because, as will presently appear, they had considerable influence upon the *Times*' official articles.

I read (November 12, 1863) a letter from New York in which the word "heroism" caught my eye, as applied to the North. On looking more closely, I saw that in the same sentence the North was called "stiffnecked" and "stubborn", and that, after all, it only possessed an amount of consistency and unity "which really resembled heroism". Still I thought it scarcely possible that the New York correspondent should have permitted himself such a slip, and on looking more closely, I found that the letter came from the "special correspondent" above mentioned. This anecdote will illustrate the general tendency of these remarkable letters. They are one long effort, lasting for three years, to shut his own eyes and the eyes of his countrymen to the existence of any heroic qualities in the people amonst whom he lived. It must have been an irksome task for a generous mind, and it is nothing short of sickening for any man of common feeling to read as a collected whole. We might take it as an agreeable bitter at intervals, but any one who follows my example in plodding through column after column of ceaseless abuse of a great nation will rise with a sense of weariness

and disgust. Every patriotic action is explained to have really originated in corruption or selfishness. Scandal after scandal is raked together, and carefully exhibited as an average specimen of American affairs. If you put any faith in the writer, the whole political and social machinery is rotten at the core and is worked by the most degraded motives; America is peopled by an unprincipled mob, sprinkled with charlatans and hypocrites, and governed by pettifogging attorneys. They hire other men to fight because they have no loyalty, and abandon their liberty because they have no courage. We all know the process by which such a picture may be drawn of any people. If you test the waters of the purest stream, you may find places where it is full of corruption as the Thames; if you send out your spies to those social depressions into which the viler part of the population of any country drains, he may honestly bring back a report that he has seen none but blackguards. I hope, for the sake of this correspondent's veracity and I believe from internal evidence, that he mixed exclusively with a society justly out of favour with their countrymen. To New York flows a very large share of the foreign and disloyal element of America. Wall-street is not more likely to take exalted patriotic views than our Stock Exchange; to judge of the American people by the gossip of a clique of Southern exiles, gold speculators, and refugee Irishmen in New York, is as absurd as it would have been to judge of the French Revolution exclusively from a Royalist *emigré*, or of English politics in the last century from a clique of Jacobites. I have said that I do not know how far the *Times* holds itself responsible for the opinions of its correspondent. It cannot, however, evade the responsibility of having given to him leave to vent in its pages some five or six weekly columns of unmixed abuse. It may be presumed to have considered them at least valuable contributions to our knowledge of the time, and tolerably fair pictures of what was taking place. It thought, that is, that a portrait of America, in which every virtue was scrupulously omitted, was not a gross caricature.

In a more important way these letters affected the *Times*—namely, that they were the raw material of which a large part of the *Times*' articles were manufactured, and that their statements eked out a good many hints left judiciously vague in the leading articles. To the popular mind the *Times* is hedged about with a certain mysterious divinity; it is thought to be at any rate in possession of unusual sources of information. A weight is attributed to its words which we should not give to the individual utterances of one of its writers. A little steady reading of the *Times* will dissipate this idea. The real process is this: The New York correspondent hears that in some remote village some one has been tarred and feathered for Southern sympathies. He ekes out half a column by telling this story at full length, which he can do with more ease as the last military news was a Northern success, and will bear, like the battle of Gettysburg, to be dealt with in a few lines. The *Times* writes upon this story; or, to quit the abstraction for a moment, the *Times*' editor tells a contributor to send him an article upon it. As the story is not a very long one, and even a *Times* article must come to the point after a certain number of flourishes the column requires to be filled out. The contributor, therefore, proves that the North have lost their liberties, and are passing through anarchy to despotism, and expands this sentiment by the help of a few of the absurd historical analogies which are always kept on hand. Thus a riot, equivalent perhaps to that which happened a few days ago at Nottingham,* is the nucleus of a formal sermon from the *Times* to prove that the American Government is in the hands of the mob. And most people, who have not been behind the scenes of a newspaper, incline to believe it, and suppose the opinion to rest upon profound observation of a political philosopher. The result is flimsy enough; but as it is well understood that a *Times* article is subjcet to the careful supervision of the editor, we may assume that however slight the evidence may be, the

*Since writing this I have seen this riot noticed in a French paper as a proof that Englishmen do not possess their boasted freedom of election.

editor believes that the North are in fact falling under despotic power with a force of conviction great enough to induce him to assert it in the most positive terms. How great that is, I can't say. It would, however, be desirable that people should understand that, as the strength of a chain is measured by its weakest link, so the broadest assertions of the *Times* about America frequently mean no more than rumor caught up by a silly *gobemouche* in the streets of New York.

IX.—A Military Despotism

THE educated and intelligent men who wrote in the *Times* could not but be aware that most historical events have causes. Unable to assign that which first presented itself they were obliged to cast about for another. The hostile attitude to the Northern side, into which the *Times* had drifted so soon as the Northern side became, in its opinion, hopeless, made it extremely unwilling to admit the most obvious truths in regard to slavery. It took refuge in vehement assertions that the difference between North and South was as profound as the difference between French and English, between Magyars and Germans, or between Germans and Italians; but it never condescended to specify in detail the nature of this profound difference; it could not, in fact, have done so without meeting its bugbear of slavery immediately beneath, if not actually upon, the surface. I have shown the prevarication and web of incessant self-contradiction into which the *Times* fell in accounting for the war; I have shown further that it led to a total misconception of the effect of the war upon slavery. I now have to show how the same embarrassment distorted its whole account of the machinery by which the war was carried on. The *Times* ignored any justification derivable from the circumstance that the aim and end of the struggle was the subversion of the slave power; it was driven to maintain that the case might be fairly paralleled in gratuitous wickedness with an attempt of France to conquer Holland. Moreover, it was as hopeless as

an attempt of England to conquer France. A nation could have no rational motive for pursuing an enterprise proved by the *Times* to be at once wicked and hopeless. Two or three explanations of the phenomenon were possible. The nation might be mad, a theory much used by Sir A. Alison in explaining the French Revolution. Thus the *Times* (October 20, 1863) was inclined to agree with Bishop Berkeley that nations might go mad, like individuals. It was, however, too absurd for daily wear; it occurs in a few isolated expressions, which probably mean nothing more than that men who differ from the *Times* should, in charity, be held to be mad. Again, the war might be explained if it could be made out that by some mysterious process every one made it pay. On this supposition war would be enough to account for itself, and the *Times* be relieved of the necessity for any explanation; or, finally, it was conceivable that the people did not really care about the war, but were compelled to fight in obedience to some external will. This supposed the Government to be a despotism. In short, the Americans were either mad, mercenary, or slaves.

This last may be taken as the favourite theory of the *Times*; and, as there were not wanting circumstances to give it a certain plausibility, I will state what I conceive to have been their real relation to the facts. That the development of great standing armies is dangerous to the liberties of a country, and that Republics are apt to be converted into Despotism by successful military commanders, have become traditionary commonplaces. They have probably about as much value as such commonplaces usually possess, not, I should say, a very great one; but, at any rate, they are frequently applied rashly and in accordance with a very strained and superficial analogy. In the great outburst in the United States, it might not unreasonably be supposed that constitutional changes might take place, that the distribution of power might be altered, and that a good deal of the old machinery might require repair, or give way under the strain. It is undeniable that in the

Southern States, partially or wholly overrun by the Union forces, there existed for the time a military despotism, resting upon martial law—that is, upon the absence of all law—and often administered by vulgar governors, who frequently confounded brutality with energy. Again, in the Northern States it was an essential condition of the struggle that Government should be entrusted with great powers. Spies and sympathisers with the insurrection swarmed in the Northern cities. It was the boast of the South during the early part of the war that the plans of the Northern generals were invariably betrayed. In the attempted burning of Northern cities and in the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, we have had sufficient proof of the abundance of conspirators. Assuming that the war was to be carried on, it would have been childish to refuse the necessary powers to those who directed it. To relax the reins may be proof either that you cannot grasp them or that you are confident that you can at any time resume them. The Government of the United States are in theory the servants and the creatures of the people. In proportion as they are, in fact, dependent upon the popular will, it is safe to entrust them for an emergency with unrestricted authority, and when such authority has been committed, it is absurd to quibble about its exercise in particular instances. When the ship is in extreme danger, the crew cannot quarrel as to whether any officer has exceeded his duty. Cases of extreme individual hardship will in all probability occur; their frequent occurrence would be a proof of bad management on the part of the Government; a note should be made of them for future redress, if immediate redress is impracticable; but it would be silly to make pretexts of them for depriving the Government of its necessary discretionary power.

Now the whole question about the United States is whether the powers exercised came under the class thus defined, or whether they constituted a permanent encroachment upon popular rights. It will be at once admitted that the Constitution has undergone whatever change is implied in the establishment by military force

of the doctrine that the United States form, as Webster maintained, a nation, and not, as Calhoun maintained, a mere Confederacy resting on a compact. It may be admitted further that the central power has been strengthened and consolidated by the course of events. But we should be slow to admit, without distinct proof, that a nation of some twenty millions of English-speaking inhabitants, brought up beyond all nations of the world in the habit of settling their own affairs, and with an extraordinary aptitude for expressing and enforcing the will of the majority, would suffer this power to be snatched from their hands; that a people with whom newspapers seem to be a spontaneous product of the soil of every village should allow the liberty of the press to be tampered with except as a figure of speech; or that a nation distinguished for its almost exaggerated tendency to local self-government should allow its "liberties to be lost", as a man loses his pocket-handkerchief in a crowd. Stump orators might declaim about *habeas corpus*, as during our own wars Sir F. Burdett talked about Magna Charta, or as, before his days, John Wilkes made orations about the British jury. But as Englishmen knew in those days that claptrap about loss of liberty was nothing but claptrap, Americans knew in our time that Mr. Benjamin Wood (whom the *Times* persistently mistook for a statesman) was as arrant a demagogue as John Wilkes, and talked as great nonsense. They were perfectly conscious that the war continued because an overwhelming majority wished it to continue; and that it was wiser to submit to occasional stretches of power than to be squabbling in the face of the enemy as to the exact amount of power to be doled out to their leaders;—wiser, because they were also conscious that they could resume the powers they had bestowed.

To quote language more forcible than my own, that namely of the *Times* itself—(Sept. 3, 1864)—"There is after all no despotism possible in America, except the will of the majority". Lincoln and Seward only had power "because the mass of the people really

believed in the war and were anxious that their leaders should carry things with a high hand". I may, perhaps, assume that if any despotism had been established, it was not, in September last, visible to the naked eye.

I will now quote a few previous utterances of the *Times* upon this subject; and I will point out the singular theory which they constructed. I must also quote some of the remarks of their New York correspondent, by which it was supplemented and enforced. That gentleman was, in fact, almost crazy about the loss of liberty. I should say, at a guess, that at least half of his whole correspondence was devoted to proving this loss by argument and illustrative stories; and, as his friends belonged to the class most obnoxious to the United States Government, he was never at a loss for legends of Fort Lafayette. Of their accuracy, I have no means of judging, but I should not be inclined to accept without examination all the scandals which a Tory in 1776 might have told us about Washington; and it is conceivable that Mr. Seward might correct some of the anecdotes that appear in the *Times*.

The form of this "loss of liberty" which first appeared was the expected advent of a Napoleon or a Cromwell. (July 24, 1861.) —The *Times* already augured that a volunteer force was becoming a standing army, and as such, "dangerous to liberty".

Aug. 12, 1861.—It announced that a military dictator was not improbable before twelve months were over; the first definite appearance of this mythical individual. A candidate for the post soon appeared in the character of General M'Clellan.

Jan. 29, 1862.—It informed us that "the clank of the sabre was already heard in the halls of the Legislature". "The Federals already feel the weight of an armed hand upon themselves."

M'Clellan no more attempted to supplant the President than the Duke of Wellington to make himself Emperor of the British Isles. The *Times*' correspondent, indeed, asserted (Oct. 7, 1862)

that "he (M'Clellan) held the twenty millions of the North in the palm of his hand", and that, "if he thought proper to depose the President, or let fall some such words as 'Take that bauble away', his army would stand by him to the last man".

M'Clellan was soon afterwards dismissed as quietly as a light-house-keeper. The *Times* was utterly amazed, and even, as it seems, annoyed at his forbearance.

"While M'Clellan", it says (November 24, 1862), "is in his camp with his army, surrounded by his friends, late one night a missive is put into his hands from a President who seems to have lost all influence, and from a Government which is gradually sinking into contempt, and immediately this powerful general lays down his command, sinks into a private individual," &c.... "Is it heroic patriotism or disgust, or the absence of ambition, or want of pluck, or is it policy?" It could not be that the American people were not at the mercy of any military adventurer, for, says the *Times*, "M'Clellan obeys the law, and he appears to be the only man in America, who holds the law to be of any force".

This was a grievous disappointment. Moreover, no other general for a long time acquired a sufficiently prominent position to do the Napoleon trick. Even Grant, as we shall find out, was beaten in almost every battle down to a certain day in the spring of 1865. The *Times*, however, was convinced that the place was ready; the man was all that was wanting. One or two quotations will be sufficient from a multitude.

"Every republican form of government", as it asserted (Feb. 2, 1863), with a characteristic affectation of philosophy, "wherever found, has either gradually ripened and consolidated into a constitutional monarchy, or, which is the commoner result, violently merged into absolutism. There is nothing peculiar to Americans to arrest the milder process, except a headlong leap into the worse."

March 19, 1863.—In another pseudo-philosophical argument it asserts, after a deal of fine writing, that the Government at Washington are now labouring "not to restore the Union (they might as well restore the Heptarchy), but to reconquer what is lost, and let the worst come to the worst, to establish a military power," or, as its correspondent assured it (April 10, 1863)—for his piercing gaze was always discovering things not yet revealed to the Americans themselves—"there are many symptoms that this military dictatorship is not so remote a contingency as an easy public supposes.... The military machine is already constructed; it only waits for the hardy engineer; the liberty of Federal America will be a tale that is told."

By May 27 the despotism was in existence, for "should peace be established", we are told, "the question would remain to be tried whether the Government of the United States should permanently become, what it undoubtedly now is, a military despotism," America being, it appears, "about to offer the last vestige of her liberties at the shrine of that Moloch of slaughter and devastation" (a playful term for Mr. Lincoln), "which they have set up to reign over them".

The same gentleman had perhaps put this in the pithiest form (Sept. 22, 1862): "Were there half a Cromwell or a quarter of a Bonaparte, this overthrow" (of the Government) "would be the easy result of a *coup d'état*".

It is curious after this to find the *Times* saying, in the autumn of 1864, that a despotism is impossible in America. It still, however, clung to the idea. The Southern correspondent furnished us with a sketch of Sherman's character for the express reason that he was not unlikely to become the Cromwell of the future.

When Mr. Lincoln died, the *Times* expressed a hope that Mr. Johnson might in some way be induced to resign. "The influences", it said (April 19), "by which he is surrounded cannot be

favourable to his retention of office. Grant and Sherman are both in or near Washington", and neither they nor Stanton can wish to see their labours thrown away.

This hint was thrown away. Sherman, having exceeded his orders, instantly obeyed, as he could not but obey, the authority of the President, and General Grant has shown no more signs of being a Cromwell than did M'Clellan. In short, strongly as the *Times* seems to have expected, and even desired, the advent of a military dictator, the military dictator never made his appearance.

The despotism, however, against which the *Times* most steadily inveighed was that of Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet. I could not, without doubling the size of this pamphlet, give any adequate impression of the virulence, persistence, and energy with which it repeated the assertion that Lincoln was a despot. It seemed to cling to this as the one possible explanation of the war. I will quote a few specimens, but they no more give an idea of the whole than a bucketful of water gives an idea of a lake. Incessant allusions to the loss of liberty fill up all the spaces—often large enough—between their arguments, and show, if my views are just, the curious distortion of their opinions. They mistook a temporary and collateral effect of the war for a real cause; and because the North entrusted full powers to their servants, fancied that the servants were the masters, and a slavish compliance with their wishes the real incitement of the war.

Sept. 12, 1861.—The *Times* "says nothing" of the sacrifice of free institutions, the surrender of individual liberty, the establishment of the futile precautions of a despotism, the abolition of the *habeas corpus*, the suppression of papers, the imprisonment of ladies, and certainly nothing of gentlemen being ridden out of town on a rail.

Sept. 6, 1862.—"Is a nation wise which embraces ruin and slaughter for the present in order to consolidate a government of

terror and repression for the future? Domiciliary visits and midnight arrests, without crime, and without an accuser, are present to every one's mind".

Sept. 16.—"There is not one tenth part of the liberty of opinion and discussion in America which exists in Republican France".

Oct. 28.—"To be suspect of being suspect is good cause for incarceration in North America.... If the Republicans win (the election), the war will go on for some time longer under the protection of a reign of terror".

They entertain some hopes, however, for (November 8, 1862) they cannot but expect a Democratic victory, as "a brilliant despotism may blind a nation for a time, but a Government that is at once stupid and tyrannical cannot long avert its own overthrow".

June 18, 1863.—The conscription was the one thing wanting to make the Government a centralized military despotism. "The State organization will be dissolved. The Federal organization of the Republic will be destroyed. Bare and naked force will be set up as the only title to obedience and the only symbol of command."

Aug. 3.—Absolute power is probable. The issue (as between the Government and Vallandigham) is an issue between liberty and despotism. "Whatever the President wills is law." "The interests of the North are almost identical with those of the South"; "both are in danger of subjugation at the hands of a third power," —namely, the Federal Government.

Aug. 28.—The Constitution is being "rapidly moulded into a form which will make them in practice the greatest military despotism that the world has ever seen".

Nov. 28.—The main object of thanksgiving (Mr. Lincoln having absurdly supposed that the victories of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and others, in the summer of 1863, deserved thanksgiving)

should be that, in such hands as Lincoln's, the State has hitherto escaped total destruction. "Personal liberty is gone; the Government rules by virtue of the army, which, unable to conquer the South, has an easy triumph over the laws and liberties of the North. We admit the Government to be, for the moment, "strong, but refuse to believe that its strength is the result of that individual freedom which it has been its principal occupation to destroy".

May 11, 1864.—"The only freemen now are those that fight in the war, or make their fortunes out of it."

Nov. 16.—Martial law has been declared wherever there is a force sufficient to control the elections. "Every scholar has wondered at the fatal rapidity with which the Roman Republic ripened or rotted into an empire; but this is, in sober fact, the process we now see across the Atlantic."

Nov. 22.—"We can regard his (Lincoln's) reappointment as little less than the abdication by the American people of the right of self-government, as an avowed step towards the foundation of military despotism; towards the suppression of a popular Government which may still exist in form, but which, in substance, has gone. Future historians will probably date from the second presidency of Mr. Lincoln, the period when the American Constitution was thoroughly abrogated, and had entered on that transition state well known to the students of history, through which republics pass on their way from democracy to tyranny".

Feb. 28, 1865.—"Republican institutions are rapidly becoming imperial in almost all but the name".

If any reliance can be placed upon the *Times*, a consolidated military despotism now exists, and has for some time existed, in America. It has indeed this strange peculiarity, that, except in the suspension of the *habeas corpus* and the various arbitrary imprisonments which have been the consequence, it has committed no overt acts. The Constitutions of the several States remain in

force, and are daily working much as before; the Constitution of the United States is unaltered, except by an impending amendment for the abolition of slavery. It is true, as I have before remarked, that one theory of the relations of the Central to the State powers has been set up by force of arms; but it is a theory held at all times by many of the best American statesmen and in no way incompatible with liberty. If the foul demon of despotism has indeed entered into the body of a free people, it must be admitted that that body, to external observation, moves about and has its being very much as it has of old. Surely it is incumbent upon those who make such reckless assertions to adduce some proof of their accuracy, to point to some undeniable symptoms of the terrible disease which is secretly corrupting the Constitution. The line between liberty and despotism is not, as Englishmen ought to know, so fine and impalpable that it requires wire-drawn argumentation and delicate analytical processes to discover whether a country is free or enslaved. When Cromwell or Napoleon had seized the supreme authority it was felt, and heard, and seen; there was no room for doubt upon the subject; there was no doubt about it, I may add, when Butler governed New Orleans. At every turn you were met by the unmistakable strong arm of military force. It wants no more argument to prove that a negro is a slave than that he has woolly hair and blubber lips. Now the North are conscious that they are free, and that the war was carried on because and so long as they chose that it should be carried on. The small minority who objected had necessarily to suffer the unpleasant fate of seeing their country fighting in what they believed to be a wrong and foolish quarrel. Individuals might for the time suffer from the authority necessarily entrusted to rulers, and, doubtless, often foolishly exercised; but, now that the war is over, even the *Times* will hardly dare to assert that the North are not a free people. Indeed, the shallowness of its conviction to the contrary is strikingly proved by the passage I have quoted from September 3, 1864, that "there is no despotism possible in America". Had the des-

potism existed except as a mere figment of its imagination preserved in fictitious vitality as a useful taunt, such an assertion at such a time would have been impossible; it would have been as hard as for a doctor to assert that a patient in the last stage of consumption, when he had been for many months under his treatment, had perfectly sound lungs, so sound as to be incapable of disease. If the burden of proof were thrown upon me, I could point to the disbandment of armies as unlike a military despotism—to the immediate and almost precipitate effort at "reconstruction" as hardly like a complete oblivion of popular government; I might point to a free press, which, even during the heat of the war, when the administration was strongest, incessantly attacked it with a bitterness rivalling the bitterness of the *Times*, and which would have been permitted in no country on the continent of Europe; and to the constant discussion and decision of every political principle by the people in every corner of the land. But I don't wish to spend time upon proving that the sun shines; I must endeavour to show how the *Times* endeavoured to make out that all the external appearances of self-government were in reality delusive; that whilst the patient seemed to be walking and talking as freely as a man well could who had so tremendous a task to perform, he was really gagged and tied hand and foot.

If a despotism "in any other sense", as the *Times* says, "than a despotism of the majority", should ever be forced upon America, it would have two tasks to perform. It would have to corrupt the elections, and it would have to support itself by an army alien in sympathy from the people. Under these conditions a Government might be set up which did not fairly represent the popular will, and might be maintained in defiance of it.

The *Times* made, as I will now show, an attempt to prove that each of these methods had been adopted.

X.—The Instruments of Despotism

ALTHOUGH, as I have said, the *Times* occasionally threw out hints, rather than positive assertions, that the elections were fictitious and enforced under military terror, this opinion was so slightly founded on fact (I speak, of course, of the Northern States) as to be generally left to the New York correspondent. His occasional statements, coinciding with general declamations in the *Times* leaders about "military despotism", tended to complete the picture; but I do not find that the *Times* often gave them the weight of its own authority. I will give a couple of instances. The elections in the autumn of 1863 were of considerable interest, and gave large majorities to the Republicans. Vallandigham was the* candidate for Governor in Ohio.

March 11, 1863.—The correspondent asserted that the Republican party, always a minority and now desperate, were endeavouring to subjugate their own countrymen. The Conscription Act was intended to supply a force to hold down the States during the approaching election for the Presidency. The conscripts of each State will be sent to do duty in States with the people of which they have no sympathy. (October 13.) He announced that Vallandigham's election was to be prevented, if necessary, by getting up disturbances and then proclaiming martial law.

I need not say that martial law was not declared nor Vallandigham elected. At this time the "special correspondent", whom I have already mentioned, was in the United States and present at Cincinnati. Although unfriendly on the whole to the Northern cause, he says positively (October 31) there were but a dozen or a score of policemen at each polling-place. The public authorities nowhere interfered. "I saw soldiers nowhere, Irish bullies nowhere, nowhere an attempt— I will not say to force—but even to solicit a vote."

*Democratic="copperhead."

Meanwhile, the New York correspondent was writing (Oct. 30) vague assertions about greenbacks, and the threats of provost-marshals. It was well that this time he had a brother correspondent actually on the spot to contradict him flatly.

The most important election was that at which Mr. Lincoln was elected for the second time. The *Times* asserted (November 16, 1864), that martial law had been proclaimed wherever there was a force sufficient to control the elections. After the elections —that is, after receiving the news of the election—the *Times* never ventured for a moment to repeat this assertion. Indeed, it is expressly admitted (December 31, 1864), that Mr. Lincoln was the *bonâ fide* choice of the nation.

One curious circumstance about the election was, that the New York correspondent made an apology for a mis-statement, the only instance that I have found of his so doing, and confessed unreservedly (January 9, 1865) that he had been mistaken in asserting that General Dix had ordered military occupation of polling places on the frontier. The fact was, as he admitted, that General Dix had occupied certain posts to guard against raids from Canada, but had withdrawn the forces before the day of the election. One more remark may be added on this subject. The *Times* had, for a long time, looked upon the Chicago platform, that upon which General M'Clellan was nominated, as a proof of a return of Americans to reasonable—that is, to peace—principles. So strongly did it hold this, that it (September 14, 1864) compared some of Sherman's battles near Atlanta to the Battle of Toulouse, fought after peace was declared—a blunder into which it was, as usual, led by the confident assertions of its correspondent. The Democrats, whose principles were represented on that platform, were a minority of the whole nation. Now (September 26, 1864) the *Times* confessed that this platform was a complete failure, because it was an attempt to combine war and peace Democrats; that is, the majority even of the Democratic party were in favour of war,

though of a war carried on upon different principles. As the Republicans were unanimously in favour of war, it follows that an overwhelming majority of the whole American people were, on the showing of the *Times* itself, in favour of continuing the war so late as the autumn of 1864. Hence the hypothesis that the war was the act of the Government, or, as the New York correspondent says, of a desperate minority forcing it upon their countrymen, becomes absurd. No one will probably now deny that the election of Mr. Lincoln expressed what was, however, foolish, the settled decision of the American people.

The attempt to prove that the army was one suited for a despotic power was far more persistently carried on. It was not, indeed, merely for this reason that we were so constantly informed that the Federal army consisted of Irish and Germans. It was an inviting topic of abuse for many reasons, and of all the misrepresentations that were so common, none, as I believe, not even that vast and complicated misrepresentation which ignored the relations of slavery to the war, did so much to excite English prejudices as this story about the Irish and Germans. There is an ambiguity about this subject which must be shortly stated. There were in America, by the census of 1860, over 4,000,000 inhabitants of foreign birth—including, Irish 1,600,000; Germans 1,300,000; and English and Scotch 540,000—more than 3,500,000 of whom were in the North. Now these naturalized citizens, who had emigrated in the *bonâ fide* intention of settling in the United States before the first shot had been fired, were undoubtedly as much justified in fighting for the country of their adoption as the native Americans. They might even be expected to enlist in greater proportion than the native population, because they would naturally furnish more of that floating class from which the armies of all countries are chiefly recruited. The real accusation was, that the American armies were supplied by persons emigrating from Europe with a view to this very purpose.

In this case, again, the accusation is in one respect trivial enough. It is a favourite taunt of the *Times* (see, for example, July 4, 1862, and May 21 and July 4, 1863), that whereas the Americans used to complain of our employment of Hessian troops in the war of Independence, they now use foreigners themselves. This comes with a rather bad grace from a nation which raised a foreign legion so lately as in the Crimean war. It implies a total misrepresentation of the true grounds of complaint. No one would have complained of our enlisting Germans, or Frenchmen, or any other foreigners in our regiments; and, in fact, I presume that no questions were asked as to the nationality of a recruit. But that which covered the German princes with an infamy which we shared to some extent was, that they sold their regiments to us wholesale without asking their consent. If an Irishman likes to exchange potatoes in a Connaught cabin for the good fare and comfortable clothing of a Federal soldier, balanced by the chance of being shot, he may or may not show want of sense, but there is no hardship in the case. If we had sold a regiment of Irishmen, or if the King of Prussia had sold a regiment of Germans, to either side, for money to be paid to the proprietor of the regiment, there would have been infamy enough. Happily we are too civilized for such transactions to be possible. The *Times* carefully ignored the distinction.

It would, however, be a proof that the American people were not enthusiastic about the war, and that a fit instrument of bondage was being framed for them, if it could be proved that the army was kept up by immigration, and not by recruits from the native population. The *Times* repeatedly asserted, or insinuated, that this was the case. I quote a few instances:—

So early as July 30, 1861, it speaks of "a standing army in which Germans and Irish are counted by the thousand".

July 26, 1862.—"The army is to a very great extent a foreign army, being composed of German and Irish mercenaries; and the

native Americans who have joined them belong to no very respectable class."

Six weeks before this it had observed incidentally (June 4) that "every New England family has its representative in the field"—a statement which was strongly confirmed by the special correspondent a year after.

August 26, however, it tells us again that, as the conscription will induce all foreigners to leave the States (we shall presently see the fulfillment of the prognostication), "we shall now see American citizens fighting their own battles, without the aid of German and Irish mercenaries".

Dec. 30.—"Their men are for the most part mere hirelings; the refuse of Ireland and Germany has been swept into their camps at so many dollars a head."

June 18, 1863.—It speaks of the willingness of the Americans to undergo all extremities, "so long as the physical suffering is borne by Irish and Germans and the pecuniary by the public creditor".

July 4.—The United States Government are "sending to indiscriminate slaughter myriads of German and Irish mercenaries.

Aug. 8.—What does the Washington Cabinet care "how many graves are dug round Fort Wagner or how many regiments of Irish and German emigrants monthly disappear?"

Before continuing my quotations from the *Times* I will give one or two passages from the New York correspondent. This question placed that gentleman in a curious dilemma. He was constantly endeavouring to prove that it would be impossible to raise an army, and that, for various reasons, no more Germans or Irish would volunteer. On the other hand, he was always proving that the whole army was composed of Germans and Irishmen. The result is sometimes perplexing, and appears to have bewildered his

employers. Prospectively, no Germans nor Irish were to be found; retrospectively, the army consisted of nothing else. It was indeed impossible to understand how, upon his showing, it was kept up at all.

June 30, 1862.—He tells us that the Yankees have contributed little to the rank and file of the Federal army; Irish and Germans form at least two-fifths of the whole number of fighting men.

July 27.—With amusing precision, he says, to show the absence of loyalty, that the North can only obtain thirty-nine seamen from all the New England States.

Sept. 16.—It appears that the armies are kept up by wretched emigrants drugged with whisky, who "wake up only to find themselves in the Northern camp, liable if they skedaddle to be shot as deserters".

Feb. 21, 1863.—We have another careful numerical calculation proving that there are only 32,330 able-bodied negroes in the free States, that as the Government won't dare to recruit in the border States, and can't get at the South, enough negro troops can never be raised. (Fifteen months afterwards, May 12, 1864, he tells us that there are 130,000 negroes in the service, 97,670 having, I presume, been manufactured.)

June 15.—He proves that it is impossible to raise 10,000 negroes.

I have taken these specimens at random from an immense number as indicating the general tone of the New York correspondent. He generally maintains that negroes can't be got, that Yankees won't volunteer, and that the armies are composed of Irish and Germans, though, as we shall now see, he frequently states that Irish and Germans are equally recusant. The continual existence of the army seems to be all but miraculous. Up to this point, however, the *Times* and its correspondent agree in as-

serting the absence of native material from the United States army, and agree in filling in the void by any number of Germans and Irish.

Aug. 25, 1863.—The *Times* made the calculation, an extremely rough one, that 750,000 men had been killed or put *hors de combat* up to that time on the two sides. And as it allowed 500,000 of these to the North, it came to the conclusion that the "bulk of the German and Irish complained of by the South must have been naturalized American citizens"—a tolerably reasonable conclusion, though founded upon doubtful figures and contradicting its own repeated insinuations.

Oct. 9.—The correspondent, however, informs us that "the zeal of the native-born Americans has died away, the unwelcome business is left to raw newcomers from Germany and Ireland"—a statement which brings back our old friends again.

Perhaps the assertion that the army was composed of foreign elements might be gradually coming true, though it had not been true at first. The original troops may have been native, the recruits foreign.

Dec. 12.—He explains again that the army could not be kept up were it not for the Irish and German immigrants and negroes; the latter especially, he says, will constitute the sheet-anchor of the future American army. (Compare the quotations above from February 21 and June 15.)

Jan. 23, 1864.—He declares that no more men are to be got. The foreign immigration would only produce 156,000 men, even if all were able-bodied, whereas at least fifty per cent were children, women, and old men; three hundred thousand are required.

May 3, 1864.—However, the *Times* states that the waste of men is supported by immigration attracted by large bounties, and carefully explains how the "surplus population of Europe" is attracted.

April 18.—The correspondent says that the North would long ago have been subdued but for the help of foreigners, but that now the Irish and Germans are in a state of chronic discontent, and won't volunteer.

After all this, it is not a little surprising to find a demonstration in the *Times* itself, that the immigration theory is all a mistake. A debate took place in Parliament upon the Irish emigration. In commenting upon it, the *Times* says (June 11, 1864), that Grant alone has 280,000 white troops, that the Irish emigration of 1863 was 94,477, of whom 36,083 only were men, including boys of twelve years old. It concludes, "With such figures before us, it is impossible to assume that either German or Irish emigrants up to the present time form any large element in the American armies. Eighty per cent. of these troops must have been Americans, native or naturalized."

After this statement, it would be reasonable to suppose that the *Times* would apologize. But the *Times* never apologizes, it simply reverses its statements.

July 2.—It boldly declared that Grant's army was kept up by "an incredible immigration from Europe".

As the *Times* had so plainly proved that the immigration of 1863 was utterly inadequate to fill the ranks, I may remark that the immigration at New York (the principal port for immigration) only increased from 155,000 in 1863 to 185,000 in 1864.—an ample proof that this "incredible immigration" was a mere invention of the *Times*. It continued the old taunts.

Aug. 2.—"It is felt to be quite a pity not to go on with a war the worst consumption of which can be supplied from the old world."

The correspondent (August 13) throws some light upon the "incredible immigration". "The average volunteers", he tells us,

"inclusive of Irish and Germans, scarcely exceed thirty a day". The more one looks into this warlike stream of immigrants, the harder it is to distinguish it. Finally, the *Times* itself came out with the most conclusive exposure of its own errors.

February 21, 1865.—After giving the numbers raised for the Federal army, it remarks with amusing complacency, "We have repeatedly explained that immigration would only account for a small fraction of these results. Even if every adult male immigrant took service in the Federal army immediately upon landing, the supply would only form a very moderate percentage on the levies raised", and it is notoriously true that nothing of the kind took place. There is something truly surprising about this. The *Daily News* or the *Star* might have quoted the same statistics to prove the falsehood of the incessant taunts of the *Times*. The *Herald* or *Standard*, accepting as an axiom that everything American is abominable, would in honest bigotry have thrown doubt upon the figures or roundly denied their accuracy. It was peculiar to the *Times* to give at once the calumny and its refutation with an air of unruffled dignity.*

The statement that the military despotism was supported by mock elections in the Northern States may be considered as tacitly abandoned. Had any proofs been at hand capable of raising a presumption that the very sources of self-government were thus being poisoned, the *Times* might have been trusted to adduce them. We may then assume that, notwithstanding the existence of the ordinary, or more than the ordinary, corruption, the electors substantially expressed the will of the people.

The theory that the military despotism was upheld by a foreign army is refuted, as well as asserted, by the *Times* itself. The notion that "conscripts from each State would be quartered in

*I have not been able to find any official statement as to the extent of the foreign element in the American armies; but it is said, on good authority, to be about five per cent; that of naturalized being fifteen per cent; and that of native Americans eighty per cent of the whole strength.

States with which they had no sympathies" is an amusing instance of the readiness of the New York correspondent to swallow the most unbounded fictions.

One other theory remains—that the despotism corrupted the people by greenbacks; and on this, as it was a favourite opinion, and one which, so far as I know, was never definitely abandoned, I must say a few words. I will quote one or two assertions from the *Times*.

Feb. 3, 1862.—"It is pretty clear now that war is kept up by a fictitious public enthusiasm, founded upon squandering among the small class of political contractors and agitators two million dollars a day."

Jan. 18.—"It seems that the war is carried on partly from reckless fanaticism", and partly "to glut the avarice of a few obscure persons".

Jan. 20, 1863.—"The People have turned the war into a scramble for profits; the army of public banditti have won a full and decisive victory in the field for gain."

I need not quote any of the incessant assertions to the same effect of the New York correspondent, who was never so happy as when proving that Northern patriotism meant a lust for greenbacks, and Northern Abolitionism was a mixture of hypocrisy and fanaticism. The theory of the *Times* took a slightly different form at a later period of the war. It believed in the existence of what it called a "fictitious prosperity", and was not a little perplexed to account for its extraordinary duration. The bubble would not burst long after the *Times* had declared that it inevitably must.

Thus (Nov. 28, 1863) we are told that "the factitious creation of wealth by reckless issues of paper money, and the equally reckless reduction of the available amount of labour by fearful slaughter of the working classes in civil war, may raise the rate of wages, and

so tempt to emigrate the inhabitants of populous countries. These things give little hope for the future prospects of a country that really seems to verify the paradox of the poet, 'where (paper) wealth accumulates and men decay' ".

On December 14, 1863, it expresses its amazement at the duration of a fictitious prosperity which an inflated currency and a prodigal expenditure are sure to produce for the time.

I believe that on the strength of these and similar statements many persons in England seriously believed that the war was carried on because, by some strange commercial hocus-pocus, it paid, or seemed to pay, for itself. It was a kind of Law's scheme, stimulated and accompanied by a war. There are some men who will always gladly believe that great results can be accomplished by petty motives—men who would once have delighted to explain the French Revolution by the gold of Pitt, or the American war of independence by speculations in tea. This explanation of the war would be congenial to them. A great revolution worked out by inferior instruments, a tremendous convulsion of a society composed in overwhelming proportions of half-educated and half-refined men, must infallibly bring to the surface much that is shocking to delicate tastes. There were chances of profit for the large class, nowhere larger than in America, to whom even national honour would afford mere matter of speculation. In a struggle which shook society to its base, there was good scrambling for high prizes. But it is scarcely characteristic of a generous or of a philosophical mind, to mistake the profit incidentally arising to stock-jobbers and shoddy manufacturers for the cause of the whole struggle. Nations are moved to their depths, and efforts which would strain the most unbounded resources are stimulated, by deeper and less grovelling motives than the hope of picking up a few dollars in the confusion. A battle, doubtless, is a good thing for the crows and the creeping things, but it is not generally fought for their benefit. The theory, stated plainly, confutes itself so conclusively that I

need scarcely point out that its political economy presents a few difficulties. Perhaps this may be due to the fact that, as the *Times* put it (June 24, 1862), "the world is not large enough to hold" political economy and the United States "together". I can understand a "fictitious prosperity" produced by borrowing other people's money; but the American debt was raised at home almost entirely. I can understand that "fictitious prosperity" which accompanies a great inflation of credit, and a consequent increase of circulation, and which lasts until persons have begun to realize. But credit has not been inflated in the United States; the paper currency has produced its natural effect in the rise of prices; and so soon as that effect commenced, the Yankee was quite acute enough to discover that his paper dollar was worth less than his silver dollar. A fictitious prosperity of this kind lasting for four years is simply incredible. The fact that it has not long ago collapsed is proof enough that the prosperity, such as it was, was really due to great resources, not to imaginary wealth. The simple truth is, that turning capital from other industries into the production of divers machines for blowing men to bits, does not tend to make a country richer, or even to make itself richer for any length of time. Even the receipt of killing off a large proportion of the able-bodied males would not necessarily cause such a rise of wages as to add to the general prosperity of the country. Widows and orphans are apt to make their presence known.

Granting, however, that there was some truth caricatured in these statements, it is plain enough, from one simple consideration, that they do not reveal a true cause of the continuance of the war. The centres of the "shoddy" interest were the places most opposed to the policy of the Administration, such as the city of New York. That policy was most unflinchingly supported by the country districts of the "territorial democracy", where the drain of labour and the rise of prices were most severely felt, and to which the contractors' profits never penetrated.

XI.—Military Criticism

I HAVE endeavoured to show that the *Times* gave a preposterous caricature of the origin of the war, of its effect upon the country, and of the means by which it was maintained. The prejudice which denied the war to be in any way related to slavery, and which denied that it was leading to any result but a military despotism, led to an equal distortion of the facts of the war. I shall endeavour to illustrate this by giving a short summary of the *Times*' account of the last year of the war. I may remark that any one who believes in the impartiality of the *Times* would do well to compare these articles with an extremely able series which appeared in the *Globe*—a paper not favourable to the North, but quite above the folly of distorting the facts of the war.

The fortunes of the Confederacy culminated in the spring of 1863. In the East, General Lee was able to make his most determined effort at an invasion of the North. In the West, Grant was detained for months before Vicksburg, and a long delay produced in the otherwise almost uniform progress of the Federal arms in the Western States. The battle of Gettysburg and the taking of Vicksburg, which occurred on the 4th of July, marked the turn of the tide. In the autumn, Rosecrans cleared Tennessee and advanced to Chattanooga. He was severely defeated at Chickamauga, but the fortunes of the North were restored by Grant's victory on Missionary Ridge. At the close of 1863 the Northern side was distinctly in the ascendant. In 1864, as we all remember, Grant fought the desperate series of battles which resulted in the siege of Petersburg. Sherman forced his way to Atlanta and thence to the Atlantic coast. The series of victories under which the Confederacy collapsed are fresh in our memories. Let me now give the *Times*' account of these events.

The *Times* (July 9, 1863) had explained, on Lee's invasion, that there was a general wish throughout the North that President

Davis might instal himself at Washington. Even after the arrival of the decisive news (July 18, 1863) it declared Meade to be in danger and Grant in a hopeless position. (July 23.)—It could still see no reason for the Northern exultation. (July 27.)—The news being beyond question, it observed that "Lee had only been prevented by three days' bloody fighting from obtaining important military successes"—a circumlocution which may compare with the ingenious formulae about "strategic movements", and "drawing a man further from his base". The New York riots, however, proved that "the hopelessness of the (Northern) enterprise is never more evident than at the time when it seems most promising". This consoling reflection was strengthened by Morgan's raid into Ohio, which, it may be recollected, ended in the capture of Morgan and all his men. In November, Mr. Lincoln had the bad taste to call for a public thanksgiving. The *Times* was astonished. "It is", it remarked, "simply absurd to say that the condition of the South is worse, relatively to the North, than it was at the beginning of the war".

It had been encouraged by Rosecrans' defeat at Chickamauga and temporary confinement at Chattanooga. Having entirely forgotten the existence of Grant's army —part of which, under Sherman, reinforced the army at Chattanooga with decisive effect —it announced (November 10) that "Thomas's success" (Thomas was then in command at Chattanooga) "depends upon his union with Burnside" (then at Knoxville); "he cannot expect considerable reinforcements from any other quarter". By "success" it explains that it means escape from surrender. (November 14.)—It announces that "the best that can be expected from the invaders of Tennessee is to be spared a ruinous and ignominious retreat". The campaign of 1863 has ended leaving matters in the same state as in the beginning. (November 23.)—The Northern forces in the West are in exactly the same state as those of the English at Yorktown and Saratoga. "It will be an extraordinary instance of good fortune if Grant is able to rescue" Burnside. Grant defeated

Bragg, as I have observed, at Missionary Ridge. The *Times*, however, in summing up results, observed (December 14) that the Federals had in this year "gained the one real victory of the war. We can hardly describe by that name the success of Grant against Bragg, but Gettysburg was a pitched battle fairly won."

To explain this assertion about one of the most decided and skillfully planned victories of the war, I must remark that the *Times*, like its sporting contemporaries, kept a private prophet, one "S". This gentleman was always prophesying with signal want of success, as his prophecies were simply renewed applications of one single dogma, viz., that the more territory the North conquered the more they would have to keep (which is undeniable), and therefore the harder it would be to keep it (which does not follow). This prophet had assured the *Times* (on December 11) that Bragg was in the act of falling back when Grant attacked him, that there was nothing in the nature of a pitched battle, and that everything depended upon the struggle at Knoxville. The *Times* apparently considered "S." as a military critic of some skill, to judge from the space which they assgned to his letters, and their frequent coincidence with his opinions. The taking of Vicksburg was not to be counted in the list of victories, I presume, because, as the *Times* occasionally pointed out, the Confederates could command other points on the Mississippi.

At the commencement of 1864 the North were therefore in a bad way.

Feb. 17.—The North have only kept up their armies by the help of negroes and foreigners. "Longstreet has been entirely successful in his operations round Knoxville." (He did not take it, but that, of course, is a trifle.) The Confederates have met their enemy at every point. Hence, we are not surprised to hear that (May 3) the "present prospects of the Confederates at this fourth year of the war are brighter than ever".

The great operations of 1864 now began, Grant assaulting the right and Sherman the left of the long Confederate line. In both quarters the Confederates retired, in obedience to a preconcerted plan. Thus (May 24) Lee's falling back was "preconcerted". (June 3.)—"The latest news prepares us for the complete failure of Grant's expedition". Johnston's retreat before Sherman "may have been a preconcerted plan to draw Sherman away from his base of operations". As for Grant, it appeared presently (June 7) that "it is hard enough to get to Richmond"; it will be still harder to discover when they (the Federals) get there what they have gained by the enterprise, which has cost them such enormous sacrifices. (June 8.)—"We recognize the truth of President Davis's saying", that Virginia alone could hold out twenty years after the fall of Richmond".

Every successive move of Grant's was a failure. (July 2)—Every move in this campaign "has been made because the former manoeuvre failed". Lee "did not deign to interrupt Grant's flank march". Grant persevered or, as the *Times* put it (August 31), "still hovered about Richmond". Some relief to the dismal prospect was given by Sheridan's victory in the Shenandoah Valley; but this (October 3) was of more importance politically than in a military sense. Sheridan's success must have been valueless; for, as the *Times* observes (December 2), Sherman's taking of Atlanta is the chief Federal achievement of the year, and that is likely to end in disaster.

Sept. 15.—Grant's campaign had, as "S." assured them, "so completely broken down as almost to have passed from attention", as in fact might be expected from a previous assertion of "S" that "Grant was as much a general as Tom Sayers" (June 6); M'Clellan having "shown clearly enough the way to take Richmond," whereas Grant, "with a rare obliquity of judgment", had taken "a road difficult beyond all others, and through country special unpromising". "S" doubtless knew Grant's and M'Clellan's business

better than Grant and M'Clellan themselves, for he had pooh-poohed the former pretender to military science in almost the same terms. "M'Clellan", he said (May 5, 1862) "has taken the worst possible means of advancing on Richmond". In obedience to this great authority, the *Times* asserted (November 7, 1864) the "one principle of Federal warfare" to be to give away two Federals, five Federals, ten Federals for a "single Confederate life", and Grant blundered on from failure to failure, unconscious, it must be hoped, that he was acting in defiance of the *Times*' criticisms.

Meanwhile, Sherman was being drawn farther from his base· (July 7.)—If Grant were repulsed, Sherman must be overwhelmed Sherman managed to struggle on, and at last threatened Atlanta. The *Times* announced (August 8) that Atlanta was in danger. The value of the success was measurable by the assertion that the capture of the arsenal might compensate the North for the invasion of Maryland. Sherman, however, was in serious danger, which became gradually more alarming. (September 12.)—He has managed to get into Atlanta, but will probably be cut off. Although (September 20) his campaign contrasts favourable with Grant's, the value of the prize is doubtful. Indeed (September 22) it is proved to be almost valueless by the fact that he did not attack the enemy's intrenchments only six miles off. His danger became gradually imminent. Atlanta (November 10) was really of no importance. Indeed (November 12), "the barren victory in the Shenandoah Valley was all the Federals had to boast of in the autumn", for Sherman's position was rapidly becoming untenable. (December 2.)—As I have before observed, it appears that Sherman's capture of Atlanta was the chief Federal success of the year, and that if Sherman should be finally beaten the balance would be against the Federals. For Sherman was already in "retreat" once more. (December 3.)—Sherman, we are told, had reached Atlanta, but there his triumphs ended. Hood speedily made the place untenable.

It scarcely admitted of a doubt that Sherman's expedition must result in a disaster. Everything looked unfavourable. "The most remarkable feature of the war", it says (December 22), "is the wild and desperate effort of an out-manoeuvred general to extricate himself from his position". At length news came, filtered through Southern sources, and worked up by the *Times* into one of the most curious masses of error to be found even in its pages. (December 26, 1864.)—It announced that Sherman was emerging. His object was to reach the sea at any price. He had with him "only half the force he took from Atlanta". This was a misrepresentation, apparently, of a statement that half Sherman's army had at some part of the march been sent to threaten Augusta. "The Savannah was navigable for 400 miles above the point at which Sherman is approaching it. (It is navigable for 250 in all). The Ogeechee is one of the tributaries of the Savannah. (The Savannah and Ogeechee flow parallel to each other, and guarded Sherman's two flanks; the *Times* forced the Ogeechee into the Savannah, with the apparent intention of cutting off Sherman's "retreat".) Sherman could have no serious intention of taking Savannah. It is supposed that he intends to cross the Savannah to meet a force sent eastwards from Port Royal to meet him." The force was, no doubt, assumed to be so mystified by the sudden changes in geography as to move in precisely the opposite direction to that which in a normal state of things would bring it to meet Sherman.

Besides these main armies, General Banks had made an expedition from New Orleans, and completely failed. As the Confederates began the year with brighter prospects than ever before, as Grant lost battle after battle at a fabulous cost of life, as Sherman was retreating with little hope of safety, and Banks had been all but crushed, it is not surprising that the *Times* continued to think the Northern cause hopeless. Suddenly the ground it had thought so solid gave way under its feet. Savannah surrendered, Wilming-

ton was taken, Charleston was taken, and Sherman pierced South Carolina as he had pierced Georgia. The Confederacy seemed to be that hollow shell to which Mr. Seward had compared it, much to the amusement of the *Times*. For a time it made a feeble attempt at maintaining that, after all, the loss was not so great. The "first act" of the war was over. But that only had happened which "all Europe" had expected to happen at once, and if the South stood firm the end was no nearer. A guerilla warfare might be expected to succeed to the conflicts of regular armies. Suddenly Grant defeated Lee, and with the capture of Richmond the war practically expired. The *Times* correspondent still remained faithful. He hinted even (April 18) that the conclusive victory was rather "theatrical" than substantial, and that Lee was retreating when it took place on a preconcerted plan. The last flutter of this gentleman, as I may here mention, was an attempt to prove that Texas might still hold out for years; the letter was written after the last Texas general had surrendered. The *Times* had but one excuse, and that an absurdly feeble excuse, to make. The whole fortune of the war, it said (April 17), had been changed by the errors of the generals opposed to Sherman. If President Davis had not superseded Johnston, things might have gone differently.

The "ifs" of history are innumerable; but this can hardly be a serious statement. Every item of news from the South makes the truth more evident. Impartial observers had remarked it during the war, but the *Times* had refused to see it. The simple fact is, that of two gamblers who stake equal amounts with widely different fortunes, the poorer will be ruined first. The last reserves win the battle. The Southern cause was bleeding to death whilst the North had hardly developed its full strength. There were abundant symptoms of the fatal weakness, but the *Times* apparently put faith in its New York correspondent (a degree of credulity of which one would have thought the *Times* specially unlikely to

be guilty) and supposed these statements to be mere Northern forgeries. The *Times*, in fact, by a curious mental hallucination, appeared to think that the Southern soldiers were immortal. When it calculated that Lee had only been prevented from winning a great success by three days' hard fighting, it never occurred to the writer that this failure of success was necessarily a tremendous loss, and that even a Southern victory might easily be bought too dear. The losses of the North were constantly kept before the English imagination by the incessant calculations and exaggerations of the New York correspondent. The Southern losses were carefully concealed, and the Confederacy presented for a long time an apparently unbroken front. But any one whose thoughts were too deep, must have known that the loss was not the less severe because not openly avowed.

There is one more remark to be made. The failure to take into account the element of slavery still misled the *Times*' judgment. It said (Nov. 7, 1864) that the negro would fight for his master. As the experiment was not tried, it is impossible to say whether this is true; but it is at least significant that the masters did not venture to try the experiment until the last extremity. The employment of blacks by the Federal troops had a very different effect from that which would have followed their employment by the Confederates. It is clear gain if you can make a battering-ram against your enemy's fort of a beam taken from his own foundations. It is by no means gain to him to use the same material for an opposing machine. However this may be, slavery produced one cardinal weakness in the Southern defences which the *Times* was forced studiously to ignore. Wherever the Federal forces went, they stayed. They found half the population at least passively friendly, and by freeing them, they, for the time, paralyzed the hostile moiety. But the *Times*, by averting its sight from all that concerned emancipation, except where emancipation involved accidental cruelty, failed to allow for this in its calculations.

XII.—Moral.

ON Dec. 31, 1863, after speaking of the "foolish vituperation of England" which had been fashionable with the American press, the *Times* added, with superlative calmness, "the entire absence of retaliation on the English side can scarcely be claimed as a merit; the spectator is naturally calmer than the combatant, nor is he tempted to echo his incoherent cries."

This remark suggests a few rather curious reflections. The American press is accused of "foolish vituperation of England". I fully concur in the justice of this charge. From the *New York Herald* upwards there is much which no Englishman can read—few Englishmen, happily, read it at all—without a certain jar upon his patriotic sensibilities. The truth is that human nature on both sides of the Atlantic is tolerably alike, and that in both countries angry men use strong language, and men in the excitement of a life-and-death struggle don't pause to adjust their epithets or qualify their judgments with nicety. This is indeed admitted by the writer in the *Times*. He might with perfect fairness have gone further. The American press has, from the nature of the case, no such concentration of able and scholarlike writers of those of our metropolitan and best provincial papers. It is far inferior to ours in talent. I cannot so well judge as to its principles; but I am inclined to believe that we should find it impossible to produce any match for the *New York Herald* in thorough baseness and disposition to pander to the worst popular tastes. On the other hand, they have many journals, which appear to me to be as honestly but not so ably conducted as the best of our own. Abuse, however, is abuse, whether it comes in the shape of vulgar bluster and threats, or whether it is couched in delicate phrases. The American press does not possess the happy art of expressing envy, malice, and all uncharitableness in terms of philanthropy and brotherly love; but the substance of its remarks sometimes reminds me of what I have read in the *Times*. It wields a bludgeon instead of a

rapier; but it comes to the same whether your skull is broken or you are run through the body.

But, says the *Times*, there has been an entire absence of retaliation on the English side. Let me shortly recall some of the compliments to America which I have already quoted from the *Times*. The war, it said, was called by the North an anti-slavery war; this was for the most part a mere pretext to blind foreigners; so far as a desire for emancipation meant anything, it meant, to cover designs of diabolical malignity; it was intended to lead to the organization of "a series of Cawnpores" (September 19, 1862), or to the total extirpation of every white male in the South. The real motives of the war were far more commonplace; it was, in fact, a mere squabble for territory; in part due to a desire for protective tariffs unjustly favourable to the North, and having regard to the views of a large class, it might fairly be called a war "to keep slavery as one of the social elements of the Union". The desire for emancipation was "introduced into the war by an afterthought;" it served as a thin superficial varnish to vulgar, and sometimes to atrocious motives. In pursuing a wild will-of-the-wisp, the Northern armies, utterly unable to conquer the South, overmatched in statesmanship, generalship, and courage, had made an easy conquest of their countrymen's liberties. The free, self-governing nation of English blood had become the humble slave of a despotism at once oppressive and ridiculous. Mob law had suppressed all that was noble and exalted in the nation, and was leading them to a fearful abyss of bankruptcy and ruin. The war had rapidly degenerated into a mere scramble for profits, kept up by profuse issues of paper money, and by a gigantic debt on which they did not even seriously intend to pay interest. Such as it was the North would not fight in it themselves. They scraped together the refuse of Europe and stole the Southern negroes. Every boast which they had ever made was proved to be empty; every taunt which they had aimed at Europe might be retorted

upon themselves. An unrighteous war, in defiance of every principle upon which American government was based, would have no result but hopeless bankruptcy and the complete and final prostration of liberty. The republic had rotted into an empire, and the gangrene, as it elegantly expressed it, had burst.

This, forsooth, was not vituperation, because, I suppose, it was so obviously true. It is no abuse to call a chimney-sweep black; but when he retorts, in his vulgar language, that you are a bloated aristocrat, and that he will whip you well when he has time for the job, he is indulging in "foolish vituperation". Or perhaps, "vituperation" is too coarse a term to apply to the elegant language of the *Times* and its brethren. If I had proved that the *Times* had made a gigantic blunder from end to end as to the causes, progress, and consequences of the war, I should have done little. Its opinion might be proved worthless; but it would be merely worthless in the sense in which the old astronomers' notions of the solar system were worthless; they did the solar system no harm. But I contend that I have proved simultaneously that it was guilty of "foolish vituperation" and as I am weak enough to think anything a serious evil which tends to alienate the freest nation of the old world from the great nation in the new, whose foundation is amongst our most glorious achievements, I contend also, that I have proved the *Times* to be guilty of a public crime. It was, I admit, due to gross ignorance, and not to malice; it may, I also admit, take such comfort as it can from the consideration that equal errors were committed in America; but I still think its conduct criminal.

If, however, my previous statements should be insufficient, I will collect a few, and only a few, more specimens of what I understand by abuse, pure and simple; and I will show by one or two examples what is the nature of the evil that may result. I will quote nothing from that New York correspondent whose letters are one long, tiresome tirade, that must, one would think, have

sickened even his employers. I will merely ask any one to tell me whether the passages I am about to quote contain "foolish vituperation", or what term can be found in the English language that will more aptly describe them.

March 19, 1863.—Contains a good specimen of the *Times'* "historical parallel style", in which "all history" is ransacked to prove two platitudes and one false analogy. The platitudes are that "States are not made in a day", and that "there is no crime so ruinous as weakness or political rottenness". The parallel—so obvious that one wonders it had never been previously suggested—is between North and South, on the one hand, and, on the other, England and France when the sovereignity of France was claimed by the kings of both countries. This ingenious parallel is worked out at some length to help us to divine the future of America. Meanwhile, we are told that "the hard metal and the sharp edge of a loftier nature and sterner will have cut into that great gangrene (the Union), as our old writers would have described it, and it has burst and gone". The once United States are a mere heap of loose materials "and caldron of molten stuff ready to receive whatever form fortune may determine". This is the general text. I will now give some of the sermon.

Oct. 12, 1861.—"We regard this unnatural struggle with loathing and horror....the most groundless and wanton civil quarrel of which history gives us any account."

July 16, 1862.—"Even in America, credulous and simple as we may seem to be when we say so, honesty would, we believe, be the best policy", and it dilates upon the systematic falsification of contemporary history.

July 17.—The Americans are, it seems, "delighted with the great distress which has fallen upon our Lancashire operatives"; tbey wish to multiply the existing evil, to make it as wide and all-

pervading as possible"—as was conclusively proved by the ship *George Griswold.**

July 18.—"The feeling is becoming very general that if we .... ought not to stop this effusion of blood by mediation, we ought to give our moral weight to our English kith and kin, who have gallantly striven so long for their liberties against a mongrel race of plunderers and oppressors".

Aug. 12.—Mr. Roebuck's reviling "is so very like the truth that it will probably be received with unbounded indignation. Yet it is becoming, we are sure, the general opinion of Europe".

Jan. 20, 1863.—"A carnival of corruption"—"the people demoralized".

Jan. 26.—"No serious intention of repaying the loan at all."

Feb. 20, 1863.—The notorious "Manhattan" is quoted and elaborately commented upon throughout an article as a fair specimen of the "fiercest Unionist and most uncompromising Northerner". After quoting many of his ravings, the *Times* adds its hope that, "in speaking the language of the North, we have improved our own tone, and manifested those generous sympathies with an invader, which have been asked for at our hands".

May 21.—"The North have given no indications of sorrow or distress", in proof of which it appeals to the correspondent's letters.

I may remark upon this and similar accusations of heartlessness, that the *Times* never, so far as I have been able to discover, alludes to the most signal proof to the contrary, in that almost unequalled effort of private benevolence—the Sanitary Commission. People so heartless do not usually subscribe munificently to their sick and wounded.

May 28.—People "naturally asked whether the gentleman was to rule in the Old World and the opposite character in the New

*This vessel was laden with food for the starving, and was sent from New York as a gift.—[Ed.]

. . . .it is vain to look for those higher principles from which alone we might expect a settlement of the question". This pleasing article ends with the suggestion already quoted, that the Americans should sometimes think what "ought" means.

June 18.—"Presumptuous folly, reckless fanaticism, gambling, cupidity to glut the avarice of a few obscure persons", are attributed to the North.

Sept. 18.—"The Americans must be described as creatures of passion, without reason, or only that lower acuteness of understanding which enables them to adapt means to their immediate ends." The Americans are ruled by blackguards. (May 28) It is natural to assume them to be brute beasts.

Indeed, as it attributed to them (July 11, 1862) the sentiment, "Evil, be thou my good", it may be said to have insinuated their possession of some diabolic qualities.

Oct. 23.—America is in the hands of "brawlers, impostors, and adventurers of every kind".

Jan. 22. 1864.—"The Southerners were daily told of a universal organization in which the will of the majority should override all Constitutions, all international law, all institutions, every right and interest that stood in its way. They dreaded—and it must be said, justly dreaded, the full brunt of that tyranny which they had long known, and which, it must be said, they had helped to create, but which they now saw about to be turned on themselves".

July 5, 1864.—(I may remark, as a characteristic circumstance, that each previous Fourth of July had been marked by an article exulting over the breakdown of all American anticipations, and marked by such oratory as that of which I am giving specimens). "This war has been carried on with a cruelty far surpassing anything that can be laid to the charge of England. Towns have been burnt down in diabolical wantonness, the inhabitants of

captured cities put to work in chains, universal plunder has impoverished the chief people of the conquered States*, Congress has passed Confiscation Acts, &c. &c.' I have said nothing as to charges of this nature, chiefly because I have the fear of Colonel Crawley's case before my eyes, and know that to establish the truth or falsehood of any charge about things happening at a distance of several thousand miles would require an accumulation of proofs for which I have not the means nor the time or space. One remark must be made, which illustrates a special difficulty under which I labour. A false impression may be given more easily and more safely by omission than commission. Many of the most grievous misrepresentations of the *Times* are due to the art of omitting favourable circumstances. It is hard, however for me to assert that hidden away in some of the vast bulk of printed paper there may not lurk many statements which I have failed to remark. I know no means of giving any adequate idea of the precise extent to which the darker shades have been blackened, and the brighter omitted from the picture. I can only dwell upon positive faults in the outline. I will, therefore, merely remark that whilst the *Times* frequently alludes to alleged Federal atrocities, it passes with a tender hand over those charged on similar evidence against the Confederates. It speaks of General Macneill's execution of the men in Missouri. Indeed the story so pleased the New York correspondent that he related it at full length a second time many months after its occurrence, with no intimation that it was not a new occurrence. But the *Times* scarcely mentions Quantrell's atrocious massacre of the inhabitants of Lawrence. I have found no reference to Forrest's massacre of negro troops at Fort Pillow, though, whether false or true, the story was supported by elaborate evidence. Indeed, as I have said, the only reference to a slaughter of negro prisoners is adduced as a ground of attack upon Lincoln for raising negro troops. And I have found no allusion to that with which, more than any other, tended to embitter the Northern

*The fate of Belgium anticipated by just half a century.—[Ed.]

feeling—that, namely, of the systematic ill-treatment of Northern prisoners. It may be exaggerated or false, though a full account of the evidence upon which it rests has been published, but it should have been noticed. It is a characteristic proceeding, by the way, of the New York correspondent, that he attributes the ferocity of the New York rioters in 1863 to the "cold-blooded brutality" of the Republican journals, which had remonstrated, very sensibly, it would seem, against the practice of firing blank cartridges to intimidate them.

These quotations will probably serve as sufficient examples of the tone adopted by the *Times* whenever the North was in a bad way; for if anything could add to the impression made by the abuse, it is the contrast afforded by occasional intervals of civility. I cannot fully go into this charge. I will just remark that the abuse increased in vigour from Fort Sumter up to the end of 1861, and the connection of the war with slavery was strongly denied. During the spring of 1862 the early successes of the North caused the *Times* to speak of it with decent civility. It "could hardly blame the North", it said (April 28), for seeking what it honestly believed to be its rights, though blindly. And it incidentally admitted the war to be due to slavery. (April 17.)—It was "caused by the deadly animosities of slaveholders and freemen", and "the effect of an attempt to unsettle the relations of master and slave". Again, the fortunes of the North declined till they reached their nadir in the spring of 1863. The *Times*, besides plentiful abuse, felt itself encouraged up to the pitch of admitting slavery to be connected with the Southern cause, and defending it as socially advantageous, and even as not opposed to the Bible. This I have already proved. As the North became victorious last spring they effected another strategetical movement.

Let me now take its treatment of one or two special points. I have shown incidentally what was the *Times'* opinion of President Lincoln.

Oct. 21, 1862.—It discussed the character of "Lincoln the Last", or "Honest Abe", "Honest to his party, not to his people". "Such honesty", it added, "is an intolerable evil". "How insupportable must be the despotism in which a man of this calibre is despot!" and it speculated on Lincoln's name being in future classes amongst those of "monsters, wholesale assassins and butchers".

I have also quoted enough to show the view they took of the great measure with which Lincoln's name will be for ever associated—the Emancipation Proclamation. It was, at the time, supposed to be a cloak for a diabolical crime. It appeared afterwards to be a mere reckless bid for support. He was ready (January 12, 1863) to take "peace or war, or both at once; slavery or abolition, or both together; he gives every principle a chance", his one object being, it is to be supposed, to keep power.

Sept. 17, 1863.—It observed, "Strange that he should have blundered and vacillated so long as he has without losing confidence in himself, or altogether losing that of his countrymen".

Sept. 24.—It explains that he is "really indifferent to slavery; it is his misfortune to have become under pressure of the merciless philanthropists, an instrument for exterminating the whites".

Dec. 23.—His inaugural message is "the most cold-blooded political document ever published".

I have found no traces of the *Times* abandoning this view of his character.

Nov. 22, 1864.—It remarked upon his re-election that we have no great reason to complain of Lincoln's course. "He has gone through the course of defying and insulting England, which is the traditional way of obtaining the Irish vote". But for his countrymen his re-election, as I have shown, means "the abandonment of the right of self-government", and all kinds of horrible things. In short, he was a blundering, unprincipled, cold-blooded despot.

On April 17, 1865, the *Times* remarked on his having chosen "the most odious and offensive topics that could be obtruded into a speech on reconstruction", and infers that the only hope for America is in the rise of a new race of statesmen.

The news came of his assassination, and two days afterwards (April 19) we are told Lincoln was "a man who could not under any circumstances have been easily replaced". He "had won for himself the respect and confidence of all". His "perfect honesty had soon become apparent."

April 29.—Lincoln "was as little a tyrant as any man who ever lived. He could have been a tyrant if he had liked, but he never made so much as an ill-natured speech". He was doubtless glad at last to see slavery perish, but his personal opinions on that subject were not permitted to influence the policy of the Government".

I will venture to say that I could not have contradicted the *Times* more flatly myself. The death of a great man naturally induces us to speak kindly of his memory. But it does not always induce us to contradict in terms every criticism we passed upon him till the day of his death. Either the praise must be hypocritical, or the abuse must have been ill founded. Probably both are worthless; and such compliments are more likely to provoke contempt than gratitude.

Let me notice the way in which the *Times* received the news of the first battle, in which an army of raw volunteers broke and fled in confusion after several hours' hard fighting, without food, under a hot sun, upon the unexpected arrival of hostile reinforcements.

The *Times* described (August 7, 1861) how "75,000 American patriots fled for twenty miles in an agony of fear, although no one was pursuing them; how 75,000 other patriots abstained from pursuing their 75,000 enemies because they were not informed how stark frightened they were". The artillery was not captured, but

picked up. This is all fair play. The comments are the special beauty of the article. The Government, said the *Times*, "will call out a few more millions of volunteres, and must make a confident demand upon the incredulous world for a few more hundred millions sterling." But at bottom there must be a growing consciousness that "the Southern nut is too hard to crack". There will be "tall words", but "in the face of that screaming crowd, the grand army of the Potomac", they will be useless. Some silly boast had been made on a false report of a Northern victory. The North, said the *Times*, expects to "chaw us up", but "we are not fearful enough to be ferocious". When at peace, they "will not be so bloodthirsty as they think; or, if they should be, they will not be so mischievous as they say". Spain would be strong enough to deal with their navy, and Canada has before now given a good account of Yankee invaders. This kind of writing was admirably suited to soothe a wounded national vanity and increase the mutual esteem of the two countries.

I will conclude with one example, to show the effect which the *Times* was likely to produce upon international relations. The period at which we approached most closely to a war was doubtless on the *Trent* affair. Mr. Bright charged the *Times*, in the session of 1862, with having done its best to bring about a war. It was hardly worth while to answer a gentleman who had just made the ridiculous assertions to the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce that cotton was to be first expected from Northern successes, and that the war had given a deathblow to slavery.

The *Times*, however, condescended to say (February 18) "We expressed ourselves so mildly, so cautiously, so reservedly, with such thorough submission to the law of nations and the legal authorities, that for several days after the rebound of the tidings at America, its writers were proclaiming that England took it very quietly indeed." Let us see how matters really stood.

On November 28 the *Times* published an article in an irreproachable spirit. Its law perhaps was bad, but its intention good. It stated that the seizure of the envoys was a questionable proceeding; that it was irregular, the proper course being to make prize of the *Trent*, and bring the question before the courts; but, on the whole, it was not improbable that the Americans were legally justified, and, if so, we should yield with a good grace. It is not surprising that the Americans took at first the same view more strongly, that they assumed that they were certainly right; that their papers wrote a great deal of nonsense, retorting much of the abuse which our national organ had heaped upon them, and that public meetings conducted by stump orators welcomed Wilkes as a spirited assertor of the country's honour.

On the 29th the *Times* found out that it had made a slip. The law officers of the Crown decided that Mason and Slidell must be demanded, and on December 2 the *Times* further announced that a proper demand for their delivery had been sent. From this time till the middle of January, 1862, one leader, sometimes two, and sometimes three, appeared daily in the *Times* discoursing upon American affairs: and if any one wishes to practise the art of irritating abuse, I recommend him to study these charming productions.

The City article of the 30th had already remarked, with its usual delicate appreciation of American institutions, its fear that the decision of the matter would be taken out of the hands of the Government by the mob. The leading article of the same day implied that even this view was too favourable. There was, it admitted, "a possibility that the act was not expressly directed by the Government". "We fear, however, that the Federal Government had deliberately determined to seize the Southern Commissioners," and, in support of this hypothesis, it gave an elaborate discussion of certain rumors as to the movements of Federal vessels. This was confirmed (Dec. 3) by the assertion that America refuses

to show the slightest respect for international law. "It is evident", it inferred, "that if England should be found ready to eat dirt there will be no lack of Americans to cram it down her throat", and indeed, without waiting to discover our capacity of swallow, they must have been ready to try, for it believed war to have been determined upon long ago. The American newspapers had, of course, given food for abuse; but, before hearing of the attitude taken by England, there had been a change in their tone of "a wholesome kind", and this is the way in which the *Times* moralizes upon it. (Dec. 9.)—We might, it says, be happy if we could trust to the "blank terror in some of those broadsheets that have been breathing flames for some years past". "Because we had, half grumbling and half in contempt, allowed them for some years to tread rudely upon our corns and to elbow us discourteously", they had thought that we should submit "to have our noses tweaked in solemn form by Mr. Seward". Sheer cowardice had, it seems, improved them. Gradually, as the chances of peace increased, the *Times* grew more blustering and offensive. The war was gradually brutalizing both sides. The South were bad enough (Dec. 10), but still it appears (Dec. 17) that they were fighting "to emancipate themselves from the tyranny of a degraded mob, elective judges, and elective governors". "The natural course of financial sequences must bring the civil war to an end". Without the addition of a foreign war, "the other difficulties must produce an immediate collapse, and the peace which ensues upon utter exhaustion". Encouraged by this, the *Times* gloats over the sight of the Americans yielding to our invincible arms. (Dec. 26.)—"It would be amusing, if it were not painful, to see how the whole set of tricky politicians are preparing to meet the anger of the Britisher". It was indeed possible that, notwithstanding their abject terror, a war might be brought about, to escape from the war at home.

The more numerous party would expect to "chaw England up". A few anxious business men might be against it. The party who

object to the war, because it will embarrass the conquest of the South are balanced by the large party disgusted with the present contest and anxious to get out of it by a war with England. We all know, as the mob are the rulers of the United States, whether "the few anxious business men" and the sincere fanatics are likely to control the braggarts and dishonest politicians. The *Times* argued anxiously and as long as possible that war was highly probable. The tone of America had become peaceful; as the *Times* put it (Jan. 2, 1862), "when the lion approaches the douar of the wandering Arab, the dogs of the encampment are silent from fear"; but, as it consolingly added, "it is not certain that the men of that encampment will give up the sheep for which he is roaring without a fight". It repudiated with indignation the weak proposals of Lord Ebury and some weak-minded lovers of peace, who proposed an arbitration. It bragged of our capacity to whip the Yankees whenever we pleased. The Americans were ignorant of our power (January 3, 1862)—"At privateering we, as being infinitely stronger, could do more than they." Our privateers "would be as certain in the long run to beat theirs as our Royal Navy would be to beat their ships of war." A war, indeed, would, comparatively speaking, be sport to us, though death to them—"their navy is scarcely more formidable than that of Italy or Spain". And throughout all this reckless abuse or bluster there is not one civil word nor one hint that any considerations of justice could possible have any weight with Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward, or the American people. Mason and Slidell were surrendered, and the abuse of the *Times* was increased (if possible) in proportion to it sense of safety. The surrender, it assured us as soon as it was reported, was due not to Vattel and Bynkershoek, (Jan. 9, 1862)—"but to the promptitude with which we reinforced Admiral Hughes' fleet and poured battalion after battalion into Canada." The quarrel being over (Jan. 10) it observed, "we are rather better friends than before". As, however, it is reported that the Northerner hates England twice as much as he loves the Union, we had better maintain our forces in

Canada. Mason and Slidell were on their way to England, and the *Times* feared that they would receive what it calls an "ovation". It accordingly informed them (January 11, 1862) that "the general impression in this country is that both sides in the States have acted as ill as could be....that it is not for England to decide which of them bears the palm for insolence, outrage, treachery, and folly." The quarrel was like one between two noisy brats in the nursery, which the mother is called to quiet, and it draws this beautiful moral:—"Let us sincerely hope that our countrymen will not give these fellows anything in the shape of an ovation.... We should have done just as much to rescue two of their own negroes .... So please, British public, let's have none of these things."

As a humble member of that collective unit, I shrink from the offensive familiarity of this *soi-disant* representative of my country as one shrinks from being patted on the back by a British snob in a foreign land. During the rest of January the *Times* absolutely coruscated with a succession of jubilant articles calculated to point out to the North their extreme folly and our serene wisdom.

In the presence of a national danger there are two lines of policy possible. One is to abstain from studied insult, to give the American Government all the strength which a calm appeal to their sense of justice could confer, and whilst preparing for war, to seek by all honourable means for peace. But if policy is to be determined by the motive of pleasing your audience, and your audience is certain to be in a bad temper, then say all the insulting things you can think of. Tell the Americans that a deliberate breach of international law was all we expected of them that we were ready to punish them like yelping curs; that we hoped nothing from their justice, but much from their cowardice; that even if their Government wished to be just, which is highly improbable, the mob would not permit; fill all vacant spaces with well worn topics of abuse; rake up all the old quarrels you can think of; and,

if you don't promote peace, you will certainly sell your paper. I do not know how large a dose of this abuse reached America in time to influence the decision of the United States Government and people; but even if the *Times* can escape on the plea that it only used this language when it was tolerably safe, I would observe that it was not likely to make things pleasant for the next quarrel that might occur.

And this is my moral:— The persistent misapprehensions of the *Times* have, in my opinion, produced a very serious mischief. It was not that it took the Southern side. No American would have a right to complain if it had preferred the principle of State Rights to the abolition of slavery, although it is highly probable that many Americans would have complained and attributed it to mean jealousy. But my complaint againt the *Times* is that its total ignorance of the quarrel, and the presumption with which it pronounced upon its merits, led to its pouring out a ceaseless flood of scurrilous abuse, couched, indeed, in decent language, but as essentially insulting as the brutal vulgarities of the *New York Herald*. No American—I will not say with the feelings of a gentleman, for of course there are no gentlemen in America— but no American with enough of the common feelings of humanity to resent the insult when you spit in his face, could fail to be wounded, and, so far as he took the voice of the *Times* for the voice of England, to be irritated against England. I am not so vain as to think that anything which I can do will at all lower the *Times* in popular esteem. An attack upon its character for consistency and political morality is pretty much thrown away; it is like accusing a gipsy of not having a clean shirt; it has long learnt to be independent of that luxury. If I had the eloquence of Burke my attacks would be of little importance to the *Times*. Still, I am anxious to do what little I can, not to injure the *Times*, but to explain the true value of its criticism in this particular case. I may help to prove to some Americans that the *Times* does not express the judgment of

thoughtful Englishmen, but only supplies the stimulating, but intrinsically insipid fare that most easily titillates an indolent appetite. Men whose opinion about America are mere guesses lying on the surface of their minds, and never subject to its serious operations, like this kind of stuff. That is true, but that is all that is to be said; and I see no reason why a sensible American should be vexed by such random ignorance. All that I can profess to do for English readers is, to give an additional proof of the correctness of the common opinion about the *Times*, namely, that, as for consistency, it has none, and its politics are altogether uncertain.

It is probable that the interests of foreign politics may continue to increase. Personal obervation in America has shown me the pernicious effect which the *Times* may produce upon our relation with other countries. The cruel insults to men who, at least, were patriotic to the pitch of enthusiasm, were supposed to come from the English nation; and every concession became doubly difficult. If future complications should arise, any contribution towards a due appreciation of the *Times* may be valuable.

I will only add that I have been quite unable to give a complete picture of the *Times*, and, especially, to give any adequate idea of its abuse. I have gathered a few pearls on the shore of the great ocean of misrepresentation. I cannot hope that anyone will feel their full force who does not remember that they are mere specimens, and that the effect of steady abuse accumulates like the effect of the drops of water falling on the head of a prisoner in the Inquisition.

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